AN INQUIRY

INTO THE PREVAILING NOTIONS

OF THE

FREEDOM OF WILL,

WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO BE

ESSENTIAL TO MORAL AGENCY, VIRTUE AND VICE, REWARD AND PUNISHMENT, PRAISE AND BLAME.

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"It is not of him that willeth."—Rom. ix., 16.

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MDCCCLV.

PREFACE.

MANY find much fault with the calling professing Christians, that differ one from another in some matters of one opinion, by distinct names; especially calling them by the names of particular men, who have distinguished themselves as maintainers and promoters of those opinions—as the calling some professing Christians Arminians, from Arminius, others Arians, from Arius, others Socinians, from Socinus, and the like. They think it unjust in itself, as it seems to suppose and suggest that the persons marked out by these names received those doctrines which they entertain out of regard to, and reliance on, those men after whom they are named; as though they made them their rule; in the same manner as the followers of Christ are called Christians, after his name, whom they regard and depend upon as their great head and rule. Whereas, this is an unjust and groundless imputation on those that go under the forementioned denominations. Thus, say they, there is not the least ground to suppose, that the chief divines, who embrace the scheme of doctrine which is by many called Arminianism, believe it the more because Arminius believed it; and that there is no reason to think any other than that they sincerely and impartially study the Holy Scriptures, and inquire after the mind of Christ, with as much judgment and sincerity as any of those that call them by these names; that they seek after truth, and are not careful whether they think exactly as Arminius did; yea, that in some things they actually differ from him. This practice is also esteemed actually injurious on this account, that it is supposed naturally to lead the multitude to imagine the

difference between persons thus named and others to be greater than it is; yea, as though it were so great that they must be, as it were, another species of beings. And they object against it as arising from an uncharitable, narrow, contracted spirit; which, they say, commonly inclines persons to confine all that is good to themselves and their own party, and to make a wide distinction between themselves and others, and stigmatize those that differ from them with odious names. They say, moreover, that the keeping up such a distinction of names has a direct tendency to uphold distance and disaffection, and keep alive mutual hatred among Christians, who ought all to be united in friendship and charity, however they cannot in all things think alike.

I confess these things are very plausible; and I will not deny that there are some unhappy consequences of this distinction of names, and that men's infirmities and evil dispositions often make an ill improvement of it; but yet I humbly conceive these objections are carried far beyond reason. The generality of mankind are disposed enough, and a great deal too much, to uncharitableness, and to be censorious and bitter towards those that differ from them in religious opinions; which evil temper of mind will take occasion to exert itself, from many things in themselves innocent, useful, and necessary. But yet there is no necessity to suppose that they thus distinguishing persons of different opinions by different names arises mainly from an uncharitable spirit. It may arise from the disposition there is in mankind —whom God has distinguished with an ability and inclination for speech—to improve the benefit of language, in the proper use and design of names, given to things which they have often occasion to speak of, or signify their minds about; which is to enable them to express their ideas with ease and expedition, without being incumbered with an obscure and difficult circumlocution. And they thus distinguishing persons of different opinions in religious matters may not imply nor infer any more than that there is a difference, and that the difference is such as we find we have often occasion to take notice of, and make mention of. That which we have frequent occasion to speak of—whatever it be that gives the occasion—this wants a name; and it is always a defect in language, in such cases, to be obliged to make use of a description, instead of a name. Thus we have often occasion

to speak of those who are the descendants of the ancient inhabitants of France, who were subjects or heads of the government of that land, and speak the language peculiar to it, in distinction from the descendants of the inhabitants of Spain, who belonged to that community, and speak the language of that country. And, therefore, we find the great need of distinct names to signify these different sorts of people, and the great convenience of those distinguishing words, French and Spaniards; by which the signification of our minds is quick and easy, and our speech is delivered from the burden of a continual reiteration of diffuse descriptions, with which it must otherwise be embarrassed.

That the difference of the opinions of those who in their general scheme of divinity agree with these two noted men, Calvin, and Arminius, is a thing there is often occasion to speak of, is what the practice of the latter itself confesses; who are often, in their discourses and writings, taking notice of the supposed absurd and pernicious opinions of the former sort. And, therefore, the making use of different names in this case cannot reasonably be objected against, or condemned, as a thing which must come from so bad a cause as they assign. It is easy to be accounted for, without supposing it to arise from any other source than the exigence and natural tendency of the state of things; considering the faculty and disposition God has given mankind, to express things which they have frequent occasion to mention by certain distinguishing names. It is an effect that is similar to what we see arise in innumerable cases which are parallel, where the cause is not at all blameworthy.

Nevertheless, at first I had thoughts of carefully avoiding the use of the appellation Arminian in this treatise. But I soon found I should be put to great difficulty by it; and that my discourse would be so incumbered with an often repeated circumlocution, instead of a name, which would express the thing intended as well and better, that I altered my purpose. And, therefore, I must ask the excuse of such as are apt to be offended with things of this nature, that I have so freely used the term Arminian, in the following discourse. I profess it to be without any design to stigmatize persons of any sort with a name of reproach, or at all to make them appear more odious. If when I had

occasion to speak of those divines who are commonly called by this name, I had, instead of styling them Arminian, called them *these men*, as Dr. Whitby does Calvinistic divines, it probably would not have been taken any better, or thought to show a better temper, or more good manners. I have done as I would be done by in this matter. However the term Calvinist is in these days, among most, a term of greater reproach than the term Arminian, yet I should not take it at all amiss to be called a Calvinist, for distinction's sake; though I utterly disclaim a dependance on Calvin, or believing the doctrines which I hold because he believed and taught them; and cannot justly be charged with believing in everything just as he taught.

But lest I should really be an occasion of injury to some persons, I would here give notice, that though I generally speak of that doctrine, concerning free will and moral agency, which I oppose, as an Arminian doctrine, yet I would not be understood as asserting that every divine or author whom I have occasion to mention as maintaining that doctrine, was properly an Arminian, or one of that sort which is commonly called by that name. Some of them went far beyond the Arminians; and I would by no means charge Arminians in general with all the corrupt doctrine which these maintained. Thus, for instance, it would be very injurious if I should rank Arminian divines in general with such authors as Mr. Chubb. I doubt not many of them have some of his doctrines in abhorrence; though he agrees, for the most part, with Arminians in his notion of the freedom of the will. And, on the other hand, though I suppose this notion to be a leading article in the Arminian scheme, that which, if pursued in its consequences, will truly infer, or naturally lead to all the rest, yet I do not charge all that have held this doctrine, with being Arminians. For whatever may be the consequences of the doctrine really, yet some that hold this doctrine may not own nor see these consequences; and it would be unjust, in many instances, to charge every author with believing and maintaining all the real consequences of his avowed doctrines. And I desire it may be particularly noted, that though I have occasion in the following discourse often to mention the author of the book intitled "An Essay on the Freedom of the Will, in God and the Creature," as holding that notion of freedom of

will which I oppose, yet I do not mean to call him an Arminian, however in that doctrine he agrees with Arminians, and departs from the current and general opinion of Calvinists. If the author of that essay be the same as it is commonly ascribed to, he doubtless was not one that ought to bear that name. But however good a divine he was in many respects, yet that particular Arminian doctrine which he maintained is never the better for being held by such an one, nor is there less need of opposing it on that account; but rather is there the more need of it; as it will be likely to have the more pernicious influence for being taught by a divine of his name and character; supposing the doctrine to be wrong, and in itself to be an ill tendency.

I have nothing further to say, by way of preface, but only to bespeak the reader's candour and calm attention to what I have written. The subject is of such importance as to demand attention, and the most thorough consideration. Of all kinds of knowledge that we can ever obtain, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves are the most important. As religion is the great business for which we are created, and on which our happiness depends, and as religion consists in an intercourse between ourselves and our maker, and so has its foundation in God's nature and ours, and in the relation that God and we stand in to each other, therefore a true knowledge of both must be needful in order to true religion. But the knowledge of ourselves consists chiefly in right apprehensions concerning those two chief faculties of our nature, the understanding and will. Both are very important; yet the science of the latter must be confessed to be of the greatest moment; inasmuch as all virtue and religion have their seat more immediately in the will, consisting more especially in right acts and habits of this faculty. And the grand question about freedom of the will, is the main point that belongs to the science of the will. Therefore, I say, the importance of this subject greatly demands the attention of Christians, and especially of divines. But as to my manner of handling the subject, I will be far from presuming to say that it is such as demands the attention of the reader to what I have written. I am ready to own that in this matter I depend on the reader's courtesy. But only thus far I may have some colour for putting in a claim, that if the reader be dis-

posed to pass his censure on what I have written, I may be fully and patiently heard, and well attended to, before I am condemned. However, this is what I would humbly ask of my readers, together with the prayers of all sincere lovers of truth, that I may have much of that spirit which Christ promised his disciples, which guides into all truth; and that the blessed and powerful influences of this spirit would make truth victorious in the world.

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

PART I.

Wherein are Explained and Stated various Terms and Things belonging to the Subject of the ensuing Discourse.

SECTION I.

CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE WILL.

It may possibly be thought that their is no great need of going about to define or describe the will, this word being generally as well understood as any other word we can use to explain it; and so perhaps it would be, had not philosophers, metaphysicians, and polemic divines brought the matter into obscurity by the things they have said of it. But since it is so, I think it may be of some use, and will tend to the greater clearness in the following discourse, to say a few things concerning it.

And, therefore, I observe that the will (without any metaphysical refining) is plainly that by which the mind chooses anything. The faculty of the will is that faculty or power, or principle of the mind by which it is capable of choosing. An act of the will is the same as an act of choosing or choice.

If any think it is a more perfect definition of the will to say that it is that by which the soul either chooses or refuses, I am content with it; though I think that it is enough to say, it is that by which the soul chooses, for in every act of the will whatsoever, the mind chooses one thing rather than another, it chooses something rather than the contrary, or rather than the want or non-exist-

ence of that thing. So in every act of refusal, the mind chooses the absence of the thing refused; the positive and the negative are set before the mind for its choice, and it chooses the negative; and the mind's making its choice in that case is properly the act of the will, the will's determining between the two is a voluntary determining, but that is the same thing as making a choice. So that whatever names we call the act of the will by, a choosing, refusing, approving, disapproving, liking, disliking, embracing, rejecting, determining, directing, commanding, forbidding, inclining or being averse to, being pleased or displeased with; all may be reduced to this of choosing. For the soul to act voluntarily, is evermore to act electively.

Mr. Locke says* "The will signifies nothing but a power or ability to prefer or choose." And in the foregoing page says, "The word preferring seems best to express the act of volition;" but adds, that "it does it not precisely; for (says he) though a man would prefer flying to walking, yet who can say he ever wills it?" But the instance he mentions does not prove that there is anything else in willing, but merely preferring; for it should be considered what is the next and immediate object of the will, with respect to a man's walking, or any other external action; which is not his being removed from one place to another, on the earth, or through the air; these are remoter objects of preference; but such or such an immediate exertion of himself. The thing next chosen or preferred when a man wills to walk, is not his being removed to such a place where he would be, but such an exertion and motion of his legs and feet, &c., in order to it. And his willing such an alteration in his body in the present moment, is nothing else but his choosing or preferring such an alteration in his body at such a moment, or his liking it better than the forbearance of it. And God has so made and established the human nature, (the soul being united to a body in proper state,) that the soul preferring or choosing such an immediate exertion or alteration of the body, such an alteration instantly follows. There is nothing else in the actings of my mind that I am conscious of while I walk, but only my preferring or choosing, through successive moments, that there should be

* Human Understanding, Edit. 7, vol i. page 197.

such alterations of my external sensations and motions; together with a concurring habitual expectation that it will be so; having ever found by experience, that on such an immediate preference, such sensations and motions do actually, instantaneously, and constantly arise. But it is not so in the case of flying; though a man may be said remotely to choose or prefer flying, yet he does not choose or prefer, incline to or desire, under circumstances in view, any immediate exertion of the members of his body in order to it, because he has no expectation that he shall obtain the desired end by any such exertion; he does not prefer or incline to any bodily exertion or effort under this apprehended circumstance of its being wholly in vain. So that if we carefully distinguish the proper objects of the several acts of the will, it will not appear by this, and such like instances, that there is any difference between volition and preference; or that a man's choosing, liking best, or being best pleased with a thing, are not the same with his willing that thing; as they seem to be according to those general and more natural notions of men, according to which language is formed. Thus an act of the will is commonly expressed by its pleasing a man to do thus or thus; and a man's doing as he wills, and doing as he pleases, are the same thing in common speech.

Mr. Locke says* "The will is perfectly distinguished from desire; which in the very same action may have a quite contrary tendency from that which our wills set us upon. A man (says he) whom I cannot deny, may oblige me to use persuasions to another, which, at the same time I am speaking, I may wish may not prevail on him. In this case it is plain the will and the desire run counter." I do not suppose that will and desire are words of precisely the same signification; will seems to be a word of a more general signification, extending to things present and absent. Desire respects something absent. I may prefer my present situation and posture—suppose sitting still, or having my eyes open—and so may will it; but yet I cannot think they are so entirely distinct that they can ever be properly said to run counter. A man never, in any instance, wills anything contrary to his desires, or desires any-

* Human Understanding, vol. i. page 203.

thing contrary to his will. The forementioned instance, which Mr. Locke produces, does not prove that he ever does. He may, on some consideration or other, will to utter speeches which have a tendency to persuade another, and still may desire that they may not persuade him; but yet his will and desire does not run counter at all; the thing which he wills, the very same he desires; and he does not will a thing, and desire the contrary in any particular. In this instance, it is not carefully observed what is the thing willed, and what is the thing desired: if it were, it would be found that will and desire do not clash in the least. The thing willed on some consideration, is to utter such words; and certainly the same consideration so influences him that he does not desire the contrary: all things considered he chooses to utter such words, and does not desire not to utter them. And so as to the thing which Mr. Locke speaks of as desired, namely, that the words, though they tend to persuade, should not be effectual to that end, his will is not contrary to this; he does not will that they should be effectual, but rather wills that they should not, as he desires. In order to prove that the will and desire may run counter, it should be shown that they may be contrary one to the other in the same thing, or with respect to the same object of will or desire; but here the objects are two; and in each, taken by themselves, the will and desire agree; and it is no wonder that they should not agree in different things, however little distinguished they are in their nature. The will may not agree with the will, nor desire agree with desire, in different things. As in this very instance which Mr. Locke mentions, a person may, on some consideration, desire to use persuasions, and at the same time may desire they may not prevail; but yet no body will say that desire runs counter to desire, or that this proves that desire is perfectly a distinct thing from desire. The like might be observed of the other instance Mr. Locke produces, of a man's desiring to be eased of pain, &c.

But not to dwell any longer on this, whether desire and will, and whether preference and volition be precisely the same things or no, yet I trust it will be allowed by all, that in every act of will there is an act of choice; that in every volition there is a preference, or a prevailing inclination of the soul, whereby the soul, at that instant, is out of a state of perfect indifference with respect to the direct object of the volition, so that

in every act, or going forth of the will, there is some preponderation of the mind or inclination, one way rather than another; and the soul had rather have to do one thing than another, or than not have or not do that thing, and that there, where there is absolutely no preferring or choosing, but a perfect continuing equilibrium, there is no volition.

SECTION II.

Concerning the Determination of the Will.

By determining the will, if the phrase be used with any meaning, must be intended, causing that the act of the will or choice should be thus, and not otherwise: and the will is said to be determined, when in consequence of some action, or influence, its choice is directed to, and fixed upon, a particular object. As when we speak of the determination of motion, we mean causing the motion of the body to be such a way, or in such a direction, rather than another.

To talk of the determination of the will, supposes an effect, which must have a cause. If the will be determined, there is a determiner. This must be supposed to be intended even by them that say, the will determines itself. But if it be as they say, the will is both determiner and determined, it is a cause that acts and produces effects upon itself, and is the object of its own influence and action.

With respect to that grand inquiry—what determines the will—it would be very tedious and unnecessary at present to enumerate and examine all the various opinions, which have been advanced concerning the matter; nor is it needful that I should enter into a particular disquisition of all points debated in disputes on that question—whether does the will always follow the last dictate of the understanding? It is sufficient to my present purpose to say—it is that motive, which, as it stands in the view of the mind, is the strongest, that determines the will. But it may be necessary that I should a little explain my meaning in this.

By motive, I mean the whole of that which moves, excites, or invites the mind to volition, whether that be one thing singly, or many things conjunctly. Many particular things may concur and unite their strength to induce the mind; and when it is so, all together are, as it were, one complex motive. And when I speak of the strongest motive, I have respect to the strength of the whole that operates to induce to a particular act of volition, whether that be the strength of one thing alone, or of many together.

Whatever is a motive, in this sense, must be something that is extant in the view or apprehension of the understanding, or perceiving faculty. Nothing can induce or invite the mind to will or act any thing, any further than it is perceived, or is some way or other in the mind's view; for what is wholly unperceived, and perfectly out of the mind's view, cannot affect the mind at all. It is most evident, that nothing is in the mind, or reaches it, or takes any hold of it, any otherwise than as it is perceived or thought of.

And I think it must also be allowed by all, that every thing that is properly called a motive, excitement, or inducement to a perceiving willing agent, has some sort and degree of tendency, or advantage to move or excite the will, previous to the effect, or to the act of the will excited. This previous tendency of the motive is what I call the strength of the motive. That motive which has a less degree of previous advantage or tendency to move the will, or that appears less inviting, as it stands in the view of the mind, is what I call a weaker motive. On the contrary, that which appears most inviting, and has, by what appears concerning it to the understanding or apprehension, the greatest degree of previous tendency to excite and induce the choice, is what I call the strongest motive. And in this sense, I suppose the will is always determined by the strongest motive.

Things that exist in the view of the mind have their strength, tendency, or advantage to move or excite its will, from many things appertaining to the nature and circumstances of the thing viewed, the nature and circumstances of the mind that views, and the degree and manner of its view; of which it would perhaps be hard to make a perfect enumeration. But so much, I think,

may be determined in general, without room for controversy, that whatever is perceived or apprehended by an intelligent and voluntary agent, which has the nature and influence of a motive to volition or choice, is considered or viewed as good; nor has it any tendency to invite or engage the election of the soul in any further degree than it appears such. For to say otherwise, would be to say, that things that appear have a tendency by the appearance they make, to engage the mind to elect them some other way than by their appearing eligible to it; which is absurd. And, therefore, it must be true, in some sense, that the will always is as the greatest apparent good is; however, for the right understanding of this, two things must be well and distinctly observed:—

Firstly—It must be observed in what sense I use the term good; namely, as of the same import with agreeable. To appear good to the mind, as I use the phrase, is the same as to appear agreeable, or seem pleasing to the mind. Certainly, nothing appears inviting and eligible to the mind, or tending to engage its inclination and choice, considered as evil or disagreeable; nor, indeed, as indifferent, and neither agreeable nor disagreeable. But if it tends to draw the inclination, and move the will, it must be under the notion of that which suits the mind. And, therefore, that must have the greatest tendency to attract and engage it which, as it stands in the mind's view, suits it best, and pleases it most; and in that sense, is the greatest apparent good: to say otherwise, is little, if anything, short of a direct and plain contradiction. The word good, in this sense, includes in its signification, the removal or avoiding of evil, or of that which is disagreeable and uneasy. It is agreeable and pleasing to avoid what is disagreeable and displeasing, and to have uneasiness removed. So that here is included what Mr. Locke supposes determines the will. For when he speaks of uneasiness as determining the will, he must be understood as supposing that the end or aim which governs in the volition or act of preference, is the avoiding or removal of that uneasiness; and that is the same thing as choosing and seeking what is more easy and agreeable.

Secondly—When I say, the will is as the greatest apparent good is, or (as I have explained it) that volition

has always for its object the thing which appears most agreeable, it must be carefully observed, to avoid confusion and needless objection, that I speak of the direct and immediate object of the act of volition, and not some object that the act of will has not an immediate, but only an indirect and remote, respect to. Many acts of volition have some remote relation to an object, that is different from the thing most immediately willed and chosen. Thus, when a drunkard has his liquor before him, and he has to choose whether to drink it or not, the proper and immediate objects, about which his present volition is conversant, and between which his choice now decides, are his own acts, in drinking the liquor, or letting it alone; and this will certainly be done according to what, in the present view of his mind, taken in the whole of it, is most agreeable to him. If he chooses or wills to drink it, and not to let it alone, then this action, as it stands in the view of his mind, with all that belongs to its appearance there, is more agreeable and pleasing than letting it alone.

But the objects to which this act of volition may relate more remotely, and between which his choice may determine more indirectly, are the present pleasure the man expects by drinking, and the future misery which he judges will be the consequence of it; he may judge that this future misery, when it comes, will be more disagreeable and unpleasant than refraining from drinking now would be. But these two things are not the proper objects that the act of volition spoken of is nextly conversant about. For the act of will spoken of is concerning present drinking, or forbearing to drink. If he wills to drink, then drinking is the proper object of the act of his will; and drinking, on some account or other, now appears most agreeable to him, and suits him best. If he chooses to refrain, then refraining is the immediate object of his will, and is most pleasing to him. If in the choice he makes in the case, he prefers a present pleasure to a future advantage, which he judges will be greater when it comes, then a lesser present pleasure appears more agreeable to him than a greater advantage at a distance. If, on the contrary, a future advantage is preferred, then that appears most agreeable, and suits him best. And so still the present volition is as the greatest apparent good at present is.

I have chosen to express myself thus—that the will always is as the greatest apparent good, or as what appears most agreeable, is, rather than to say, that the will is determined by the greatest apparent good, or by what seems most agreeable; because an appearing most agreeable or pleasing to the mind, and the mind's preferring and choosing, seem hardly to be properly and perfectly distinct. If strict propriety of speech be insisted on, it may more properly be said, that the voluntary action which is the immediate consequence and fruit of the mind's volition or choice, is determined by that which appears most agreeable, than that the preference or choice itself is, but that the act of volition itself is always determined by that in or about the mind's view of the object, which causes it to appear most agreeable. I say, in or about the mind's view of the object, because what has influence to render an object in view agreeable, is not only what appears in the object viewed, but also the manner of the view, and the state and circumstances of the mind that views. Particularly to enumerate all things pertaining to the mind's view of the objects of volition, which have influence in their appearing agreeable to the mind, would be a matter of no small difficulty, and might require a treatise by itself, and is not necessary to my present purpose. I shall therefore only mention some things in general.

I. One thing that makes an object proposed to choice agreeable, is the apparent nature and circumstances of the object. And there are various things of this sort, that have a hand in rendering the object more or less agreeable, as

Firstly—That which appears in the object, which renders it beautiful and pleasant, or deformed and irksome, to the mind, viewing it as it is in itself.

Secondly—The apparent degree of pleasure or trouble attending the object, or the consequence of it. Such concomitants and consequents being viewed as circumstances of the object, are to be considered as belonging to it, and, as it were, parts of it, as it stands in the mind's view as a proposed object of choice.

Thirdly—The apparent state of the pleasure or trouble that appears, with respect to distance of time; being

either nearer or further off. It is a thing in itself agreeable to the mind to have pleasure speedily, and disagreeable to have it delayed; so that if there be two equal degrees of pleasure set in the mind's view, and all other things are equal, but only one is beheld as near, and the other far off, the nearer will appear most agreeable, and so will be chosen. Because, though the agreeableness of the objects be exactly equal, as viewed in themselves, yet not as viewed in their circumstances; one of them having the additional agreeableness of the circumstance of nearness.

II. Another thing that contributes to the agreeableness of an object of choice, as it stands in the mind's view, is the manner of the view. If the object be something which appears connected with future pleasure, not only will the degree of apparent pleasure have influence, but also the manner of the view, especially in two respects.

Firstly—With respect to the degree of judgment, or firmness of assent, with which the mind judges the pleasure to be future. Because it is more agreeable to have a certain happiness, than an uncertain one; and a pleasure viewed as more probable, all other things being equal, is more agreeable to the mind than that which is viewed as less probable.

Secondly—With respect to the degree of the idea of the future pleasure. With regard to things which are the subject of our thoughts, either past, present, or future, we have much more of an idea or apprehension of some things than others; that is, our idea is much more clear, lively, and strong. Thus the ideas we have of sensible things by immediate sensation, are usually much more lively than those we have by mere imagination, or by contemplation of them when absent. My idea of the sun, when I look upon it, is more vivid than when I only think of it. Our idea of the sweet relish of a delicious fruit is usually stronger when we taste it, than when we only imagine it. And, sometimes, the ideas we have of things by contemplation, are much stronger and clearer, than at other times. Thus, a man at one time has a much stronger idea of the pleasure which is to be enjoyed in eating some sort of food that he loves, than at another. Now the degree, or strength,

of the idea or sense that men have of future good or evil is one thing that has great influence on their minds to excite choice or volition. When of two kinds of future pleasure, which the mind considers of, and are presented for choice, both are supposed exactly equal by the judgment, and both equally certain, and all other things are equal, but only one of them is what the mind has a far far more lively sense of than of the other, this has the greatest advantage by far to affect and attract the mind, and move the will. It is now more agreeable to the mind to take the pleasure it has a strong and lively sense of, than that which it has only a faint idea of. The view of the former is attended with the strongest appetite, and the greatest uneasiness attends the want of it, and it is agreeable to the mind to have uneasiness removed, and its appetite gratified. And if several future enjoyments are presented together, as competitors for the choice of the mind—some of them judged to be greater, and others less—the mind also having a greater sense and more lively idea of the good of some of them, and of others a less—and some are viewed as of greater certainty or probability than others, and those enjoyments that appear most agreeable in one of these respects, appear least so in others; in this case, all other things being equal, the agreeableness of a proposed object of choice will be in a degree some way compounded of the degree of good supposed by the judgment, the degree of apparent probability or certainty of that good, and the degree of the view, or sense, or liveliness of the idea the mind has of that good; because all together concur to constitute the degree in which the object appears at present agreeable, and, accordingly, volition will be determined.

I might further observe, that the state of the mind that views a proposed object of choice, is another thing that contributes to the agreeableness or disagreeableness of that object; the particular temper which the mind has by nature, or that has been introduced and established by education, example, custom, or some other means; or the frame or state that the mind is in on a particular occasion. That object which appears agreeable to one, does not so to another. And the same object does not always appear alike agreeable to the same person at different times. It is most agreeable to some men to follow their reason; and to others, to

follow their appetites. To some men, it is more agreeable to deny a vicious inclination, than to gratify it; others it suits best to gratify the vilest appetites. It is more disagreeable to some men than others to counteract a former resolution. In these respects, and many others which might be mentioned, different things will be most agreeable to different persons; and not only so, but to the same persons at different times.

But possibly it is needless and improper to mention the frame and state of the mind, as a distinct ground of the agreeableness of objects from the other two mentioned before, namely, the apparent nature and circumstances of the objects viewed, and the manner of the view. Perhaps, if we strictly consider the matter, the different temper and state of the mind makes no alteration as to the agreeableness of objects, any other way than as it makes the objects themselves appear differently beautiful or deformed, having apparent pleasure or pain attending them; and as it occasions the manner of the view to be different, causes the idea of beauty or deformity, pleasure or uneasiness, to be more or less lively.

However, I think so much is certain, that volition, in no one instance that can be mentioned, is otherwise than the greatest apparent good is, in the manner which has been explained. The choice of the mind never departs from that which, at that time, and with respect to the direct and immediate objects of that decision of the mind, appears most agreeable and pleasing, all things considered. If the immediate objects of the will are a man's own actions, then those actions which appear most agreeable to him he wills. If it be now most agreeable to him, all things considered, to walk, then he wills to walk. If it be now, upon the whole of what at present appears to him, most agreeable to speak, then he chooses to speak. If it suits him best to keep silence, then he chooses to keep silence. There is scarcely a plainer and more universal dictate of the sense and experience of mankind, than that, when men act voluntarily, and do what they please, then they do what suits them best, or what is most agreeable to them. To say, that they do what they please, or what pleases them, but yet do not do what is agreeable to them, is the same thing as to say, they do what they please, but

do not act their pleasure; and that is to say, that they do what they please, and yet do not do what they please.

It appears from these things, that in some sense, the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding; but then the understanding must be taken in a large sense, as including the whole faculty of perception or apprehension, and not merely what is called reason or judgment. If by the dictate of the understanding is meant what reason declares to be best or most for the person's happiness, taking in the whole of his duration, it is not true that the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding. Such a dictate of reason is quite a different matter from things appearing now most agreeable; all things being put together which pertain to the mind's present perceptions, apprehensions, or ideas, in any respect. However, that dictate of reason, when it takes place, is one thing that is put into the scales, and is to be considered as a thing that has concern in the compound influence which moves and induces the will, and is one thing that is to be considered in estimating the degree of that appearance of good which the will always follows, either as having its influence added to other things, or subducted from them. When it concurs with other things, then its weight is added to them, as put into the same scale; but when it is against them, it is as a weight in the opposite scale, where it resists the influence of other things; yet its resistance is often overcome by their greater weight, and so the act of the will is determined in opposition to it.

The things which I have said may, I hope, serve, in some measure, to illustrate and confirm the position I laid down in the beginning of this section, namely, that the will is always determined by the strongest motive, or by that view of the mind which has the greatest degree of previous tendency to excite volition. But whether I have been so happy as rightly to explain the thing wherein consists the strength of motives, or not, yet my failing in this will not overthrow the position itself, which carries much its own evidence with it, and is the thing of chief importance to the purpose of the ensuing discourse, and the truth of it, I hope, will appear with greater clearness, before I have finished what I have to say on the subject of human liberty.

SECTION III.

Concerning the Meaning of the Terms Necessity, Impossibility, Inability, &c.; and of Contingence.

The words necessary, impossible, &c., are abundantly used in controversies about free-will and moral agency; and therefore the sense in which they are used, should be clearly understood.

Here I might say, that a thing is then said to be necessary, when it must be, and cannot be otherwise. But this would not properly be a definition of necessity, or an explanation of the word, any more than if I explained the word must, by there being a necessity. The words must, can, and cannot, need explication as much as the words necessary and impossible; excepting that the former are words that children commonly use, and know something of the meaning of, earlier than the latter.

The word necessary, as used in common speech, is a relative term; and relates to some supposed opposition made to the existence of the thing spoken of, which is overcome, or proves in vain to hinder or alter it. That is necessary, in the original and proper sense of the word, which is, or will be, notwithstanding all supposable opposition. To say that a thing is necessary, is the same thing as to say that it is impossible it should not be. But the word impossible is manifestly a relative term, and has reference to supposed power exerted to bring a thing to pass, which is insufficient for the effect; as the word unable is relative, and has relation to ability or endeavour which is insufficient; and as the word irresistible is relative, and has always reference to resistance which is made, or may be made to some force or power tending to an effect, and is insufficient to withstand the power, or hinder the effect. The common notion of necessity and impossibility implies something that frustrates endeavour or desire.

Here several things are to be noted.

Firstly—Things are said to be necessary in general, which are or will be notwithstanding any supposable

opposition from us or others, or from whatever quarter. But things are said to be necessary to us, which are or will be notwithstanding all opposition supposable in the case from us. The same may be observed of the word impossible, and other such like terms.

Secondly—These terms necessary, impossible, irresistible, &c., do especially belong to the controversy about liberty and moral agency, as used in the latter of the two senses now mentioned, namely, as necessary or impossible to us, and with relation to any supposable opposition or endeavour of ours.

Thirdly—As the word necessity, in its vulgar and common use, is relative, and has always reference to some supposable insufficient opposition; so when we speak of any thing as necessary to us, it is with relation to some supposable opposition of our wills, or some voluntary exertion or effort of ours to the contrary; for we do not properly make opposition to an event, any otherwise than as we voluntarily oppose it. Things are said to be what must be, or necessarily are, as to us, when they are, or will be, though we desire or endeavour the contrary, or try to prevent or remove their existence; but such opposition of ours always either consists in, or implies, opposition of our wills.

It is manifest that all such like words and phrases, as vulgarly used, are used and accepted in this manner. A thing is said to be necessary, when we cannot help it, let us do what we will. So anything is said to be impossible to us, when we would do it, or would have it brought to pass, and endeavour it, or at least may be supposed to desire and seek it, but all our desires and endeavours are, or would be, vain. And that is said to be irresistible, which overcomes all our opposition, resistance, and endeavour to the contrary. And we are to be said unable to do a thing, when our supposable desires and endeavours to do it are insufficient.

We are accustomed, in the common use of language, to apply and understand these phrases in this sense; we grow up with such a habit, which by the daily use of these terms, in such a sense, from our childhood, becomes fixed and settled, so that the idea of a relation to a supposed will, desire, and endeavour of ours, is strongly

conected with these terms, and naturally excited in our minds, whenever we hear the words used. Such ideas, and these words, are so united and associated, that they unavoidably go together; one suggests the other, and carries the other with it, and never can be separated as long as we live. And if we use the words, as terms of art, in another sense, yet, unless we are exceedingly circumspect and wary, we shall insensibly slide into the vulgar use of them, and so apply the words in a very inconsistent manner; this habitual connection of ideas will deceive and confound us in our reasonings and discourses, wherein we pretend to use these terms in that manner, as terms of art.

Fourthly—It follows from what has been observed, that when these terms necessary, impossible, irresistible, unable, &c., are used in cases wherein no opposition, or insufficient will or endeavour, is supposed, or can be supposed—but the very nature of the supposed case itself excludes and denies any such opposition, will, or endeavour—these terms are then not used in their proper signification, but quite beside their use in common speech. The reason is manifest, namely, that in such cases we cannot use the words with reference to a supposable opposition, will, or endeavour. And, therefore, if any man uses these terms in such cases, he either uses them nonsensically, or in some new sense, diverse from their original and proper meaning. As for instance, if a man should affirm after this manner, that it is necessary for a man, and what must be, that a man should choose virtue rather than vice, during the time that he prefers virtue to vice, and that it is a thing impossible and irresistible, that it should be otherwise than that he should have this choice, so long as this choice continues; such a man would use these terms, must, irresistible, &c., with perfect insignificance and nonsense, or in some new sense, diverse from their common use, which is with reference, as has been observed, to supposable opposition, unwillingness, and resistance; whereas, here, the very supposition excludes and denies any such thing, for the case supposed is that of being willing, and choosing.

Fifthly—It appears from what has been said, that these terms necessary, impossible, &c., are often used by philosophers and metaphysicians in a sense quite diverse

from their common use and original signification; for they apply them to many cases in which no opposition is supposed or supposable. Thus they use them with respect to God's existence before the creation of the world, when there was no other being but He; so with regard to many of the dispositions and acts of the Divine Being, such as His loving Himself, His loving righteousness, hating sin, &c. So they apply these terms to many cases of the inclinations and actions of created intelligent beings, angels, and men, wherein all opposition of the will is shut out and denied, in the very supposition of the case.

Metaphysical or philosophical necessity is nothing different from their certainty. I speak not now of the certainty of knowledge, but the certainty that is in things themselves, which is the foundation of the certainty of the knowledge of them, or that wherein lies the ground of the infallibility of the proposition which affirms them.

What is sometimes given as the definition of philosophical necessity—namely, that by which a thing cannot but be, or whereby it cannot be otherwise—fails of being a proper explanation of it on two accounts; first, the words can, or cannot, need explanation as much as the word necessity; and the former may as well be explained by the latter, as the latter by the former. Thus, if any one asked us what we mean when we say a thing cannot but be, we might explain ourselves by saying, we mean it must necessarily be so, as well as explain necessity, by saying it is that by which a thing cannot but be. And, secondly, this definition is liable to the fore-mentioned great inconvenience; the words cannot, or unable, are properly relative, and have relation to power exerted, or that may be exerted, in order to the thing spoken of; to which, as I have now observed, the word necessity, as used by philosophers, has no reference.

Philosophical necessity is really nothing else than the full and fixed connection between the things signified by the subject and predicate of a proposition, which affirms something to be true. When there is such a connection, then the thing affirmed in the proposition is necessary, in a philosophical sense, whether any opposition, or contrary effort, be supposed, or supposable, in the

case or not. When the subject and predicate of the proposition, which affirms the existence of anything, either substance, quality, act, or circumstance, have a full and certain connection, then the existence or being of that thing is said to be necessary in a metaphysical sense. And in this sense I use the word necessity in the following discourse, when I endeavour to prove that necessity is not inconsistent with liberty.

The subject and predicate of a proposition which affirms existence of something, may have a full, fixed, and certain connection several ways.

I. They may have a full and perfect connection in and of themselves; because it may imply a contradiction, or gross absurdity, to suppose them not connected. Thus many things are necessary in their own nature. So the eternal existence of being, generally considered, is necessary in itself; because it would be in itself the greatest absurdity to deny the existence of being in general, or to say there was absolute and universal nothing, and is, as it were, the sum of all contradictions, as might be shown, if this were a proper place for it. So God's infinity, and other attributes are necessary. So it is necessary in its own nature, that two and two should be four; and it is necessary that all right lines drawn from the centre of a circle to the circumference should be equal. It is necessary, fit, and suitable, that men should do to others as they would that they should do to them. So innumerable metaphysical and mathematical truths are necessary in themselves; the subject and predicate of the proposition which affirms them, are perfectly connected of themselves.

II. The connection of the subject and predicate of a proposition, which affirms the existence of something, may be fixed and made certain, because the existence of that thing is already come to pass, and either now is, or has been; and so has, as it were, made sure of existence. And, therefore, the proposition which affirms present and past existence of it, may by this means be made certain, and necessarily and unalterably true; the past event has fixed and decided the matter, as to its existence, and has made it impossible but that existence should be truly predicated of it. Thus the existence of whatever is already come to pass, is now become neces-

sary; it is become impossible it should be otherwise than true, that such a thing has been.

III. The subject and predicate of a proposition which affirms something to be, may have a real and certain connection consequentially, and so the existence of the thing may be consequentially necessary; as it may be surely and firmly connected with something else that is necessary in one of the former respects, by being either fully and thoroughly connected with that which is absolutely necessary in its own nature, or with something which has already received and made sure of existence. This necessity lies in, or may be explained by, the connection of two or more propositions one with another. Things which are perfectly connected with other things that are necessary, are necessary themselves, by a necessity of consequence.

And here it may be observed, that all things which are future, or which will hereafter begin to be, which can be said to be necessary, are necessary only in this last way. Their existence is not necessary in itself; for if so, they always would have existed. Nor is their existence become necessary by being made sure, by being already come to pass. Therefore, the only way that any thing that is to come to pass hereafter, is or can be necessary, is by a connection with something that is necessary in its own nature, or something that already is, or has been; so that the one being supposed, the other certainly follows. And this also is the only way that all things past, excepting those which were from eternity, could be necessary before they came to pass, or could come to pass necessarily; and, therefore, the only way in which any effect or event, or anything whatsoever that ever has had, or will have, a beginning, has come into being necessarily, or will hereafter necessarily exist. And, therefore, this is the necessity which especially belongs to controversies about the acts of the will.

It may be of some use in these controversies further to observe concerning metaphysical necessity, that (agreeable to the distinction before observed of necessity, as vulgarly understood), things that exist may be said to be necessary, either with a general or particular necessity. The existence of a thing may be said to be necessary with a general necessity, when all things whatsoever

being considered, there is a foundation for certainty of its existence; or when in the most general and universal view of things, the subject and predicate of the proposition, which affirms its existence, would appear with an infallible connection.

An event, or the existence of a thing, may be said to be necessary with a particular necessity, or with regard to a particular person, thing, or time, when nothing that can be taken into consideration, in or about that person, thing, or time, alters the case at all, as to the certainty of that event, or the existence of that thing; or can be of any account at all in determining the infallibility of the connection of the subject and predicate in the proposition which affirms the existence of the thing, so that it is all one, as to that person, or thing, at least at that time, as if the existence were necessary with a necessity that is most universal and absolute. Thus there are many things that happen to particular persons which they have no hand in, and in the existence of which no will of theirs has any concern, at least at that time; which, whether they are necessary or not, with regard to things in general, yet are necessary to them, and with regard to any volition of theirs at that time, as they prevent all acts of the will about the affair. I shall have occasion to apply this observation to particular instances in the following discourse. Whether the same things that are necessary with a particular necessity, be not also necessary with a general necessity, may be a matter of future consideration. Let that be as it will, it alters not the case, as to the use of this distinction of the kinds of necessity.

These things may be sufficient for the explaining of the terms necessary and necessity, as terms of art, and as often used by metaphysicians and controversial writters in divinity, in a sense diverse from, and more extensive than their original meaning in common language, which was before explained.

What has been said to show the meaning of the terms necessary and necessity, may be sufficient for the explaining of the opposite terms, impossible and impossibility. For there is no difference, but only the latter are negative, and the former positive. Imposibility is the same as negative necessity, or a necessity that a

thing should not be. And it is used as a term of art in a like diversity from the original and vulgar meaning, with necessity.

The same may be observed concerning the words unable and inability. It has been observed, that these terms in their original and common use, have relation to will and endeavour, as supposable in the case, and as insufficient for the bringing to pass the thing willed and endeavoured. But as these terms are often used by philosophers and divines, especially writers on controversies about free will, they are used in a quite different and far more extensive sense, and are applied to many cases wherein no will or endeavour for the bringing of the thing to pass, is or can be supposed, but is actually denied and excluded in the nature of the case.

As the words necessary, impossible, unable, &c., are used by polemic writers, in a sense diverse from their common signification, the like has happened to the term contingent. Any thing is said to be contingent, or to come to pass by chance or accident, in the original meaning of such words, when its connection with its causes and antecedents, according to the established course of things, is not discerned; and so is what we have no means of the foresight of. And especially is anything said to be contingent, or accidental with regard to us, when anything comes to pass that we are concerned in, as occasions or subjects, without our foreknowledge, and beside our design and scope.

But the word contingent is abundantly used in a very different sense; not for that whose connection with the series of things we cannot discern, so as to foresee the event, but for something which has absolutely no previous ground or reason, with which its existence has any fixed and certain connection.

SECTION IV.

Of the Distinction of Natural and Moral Necessity and Inability.

That necessity which has been explained, consisting in an infallible connection of the things signified by the subject and predicate of a proposition, as intelligent beings are the subjects of it, is distinguished into moral and natural necessity.

I shall not now stand to inquire whether this distinction be a proper and perfect distinction; but shall only explain how these two sorts of necessity are understood, as the terms are sometimes used, and as they are used in the following discourse.

The phrase, moral necessity, is used variously; sometimes it is used for a necessity of moral obligation. So we say, a man is under necessity when he is under bonds of duty and conscience which he cannot be discharged from. So the word necessity is often used for great obligation in point of interest. Sometimes by moral necessity is meant that apparent connection of things which is the ground of moral evidence, and so is distinguished from absolute necessity, or that sure connection of things that is a foundation for infallible certainty. In this sense, moral necessity signifies much the same as that high degree of probability, which is ordinarily sufficient to satisfy and be relied upon by mankind, in their conduct and behaviour in the world, as they would consult their own safety and interest, and treat others properly as members of society. And sometimes by moral necessity is meant that necessity of connection and consequence, which arises from such moral causes, as the strength of inclination or motives, and the connection which there is in many cases between these and such certain volitions and actions. And it is in this sense, that I use the phrase, moral necessity, in the following discourse.

By natural necessity, as applied to men, I mean such necessity as men are under through the force of natural causes; as distinguished from what are called moral causes, such as habits and dispositions of the

heart, and moral motives and inducements. Thus men placed in certain circumstances are the subjects of particular sensations by necessity; they feel pain when their bodies are wounded; they see the objects presented before them in a clear light, when their eyes are opened; so they assent to the truth of certain propositions, as soon as the terms are understood—as that two and two make four, that black is not white, that two parallel lines can never cross one another; so by a natural necessity men's bodies move downwards, when there is nothing to support them.

But here several things may be noted concerning these two kinds of necessity.

Firstly—Moral necessity may be as absolute as natural necessity. That is, the effect may be as perfectly connected with its moral cause, as a natural necessary effect is with its natural cause. Whether the will in every case is necessarily determined by the strongest motive, or whether the will ever makes any resistance to such a motive, or can ever oppose the strongest present inclination, or not; if that matter should be controverted, yet I suppose none will deny, but that, in some cases, a previous bias and inclination, or the motive presented, may be so powerful, that the act of the will may be certainly and indissolubly connected therewith. When motives or previous bias are very strong, all will allow that there is some difficulty in going against them. And if they were yet stronger, the difficulty would be still greater. And, therefore, if more were still added to their strength, to a certain degree, it would make the difficulty so great, that it would be wholly impossible to surmount it; for this plain reason, because whatever power men may be supposed to have to surmount difficulties, yet that power is not infinite; and so goes not beyond certain limits. If a man can surmount ten degrees of difficulty of this kind, with twenty degrees of stregth, because the degrees of strength are beyond the degrees of difficulty, yet if the difficulty be increased to thirty, or an hundred, or a thousand degrees, and his strength not also increased, his strength will be wholly insufficient to surmount the difficulty. As, therefore, it must be allowed, that there may be such a thing as a sure and perfect connection between moral causes and effects; so this only is what I call by the name of moral necessity.

Secondly—When I use this distinction of moral and natural necessity, I would not be understood to suppose, that if any thing comes to pass by the former kind of necessity, the nature of things is not concerned in it, as well as in the latter. I do not mean to determine, that when a moral habit or motive is so strong that the act of the will infallibly follows, this is not owing to the nature of things. But these are the names that these two kinds of necessity have usually been called by; and they must be distinguished by some names or other; for there is a distinction or difference between them, that is very important in its consequences. Which difference does not lie so much in the nature of the connection, as in the two terms connected. The cause with which the effect is connected, is of a particular kind, namely, that which is of a moral nature, either some previous habitual disposition, or some motive exhibited to the understanding. And the effect is also of a particular kind, being likewise of a moral nature; consisting in some inclination or volition of the soul or voluntary action.

I suppose, that necessity which is called natural, in distinction from moral necessity, is so called, because mere nature, as the word is vulgarly used, is concerned, without anything of choice. The word nature is often used in opposition to choice; not because nature has, indeed, never any hand in our choice; but this probably comes to pass by means that we first get our notion of nature from that discernable and obvious course of events, which we observe in many things that our choice has no concern in; and especially in the material world, which, in very many parts of it, we easily perceive to be in a settled course; the stated order and manner of succession being very apparent. But where we do not readily discern the rule and connection, (though there be a connection, according to an established law, truly taking place,) we signify the manner of event by some other name. Even in many things which are seen in the material and inanimate world, which does not discernably and obviously come to pass according to any settled course, men do not call the manner of the event by the name of nature, but by such names as accident, chance, contingence, &c. So men make a distinction between nature and choice, as though they were completely and universally distinct. Whereas, I

suppose none will deny but that choice, in many cases, arises from nature, as truly as other events. But the dependance and connection between acts of volition or choice, and their causes, according to established laws, is not so sensible and obvious. And we observe that choice is, as it were, a new principle of motion and action, different from that established law and order of things which is most obvious, that is seen especially in corporeal and sensible things; and also that choice often interposes, interrupts, and alters the chain of events in these external objects, and causes them to proceed otherwise than they would do, if let alone, and left to go on according to the laws of motion among themselves. Hence it is spoken of as if it were a principle of motion entirely distinct from nature, and properly set in opposition to it. Names being commonly given to things, according to what is most obvious, and is suggested by what appears to the senses, without reflection and research.

Thirdly—It must be observed, that in what has been explained, as signified by the name of moral necessity, the word necessity is not used according to the original design and meaning of the word; for, as was observed before, such terms necessary, impossible, irresistible, &c., in common speech, and their most proper sense, are always relative; having reference to some supposable voluntary opposition or endeavour, that is insufficient. But no such opposition, or contrary will and endeavour, is supposable in the case of moral necessity, which is a certainty of the inclination and will itself, which does not admit of the supposition of a will to oppose and resist it. For it is absurd to suppose the same individual will to oppose itself, in its present act; or the present choice to be opposite to, and resisting present choice; as absurd as it is to talk of two contrary motions, in the same moving body, at the same time. And, therefore, the very case supposed never admits of any trial, whether an opposing or resisting will can overcome this necessity.

What has been said of natural and moral necessity, may serve to explain what is intended by natural and moral inability. We are said to be naturally unable to do a thing, when we cannot do it if we will, because what is most commonly called nature does not allow of

it, or because of some impeding defect or obstacle that is extrinsic to the will, either in the faculty of understanding, constitution of body, or external objects. Moral inability consists not in any of these things; but either in the want of inclination, or the strength of a contrary inclination, or the want of sufficient motives in view, to induce and excite the act of the will, or the strength of apparent motives to the contrary. Or both these may be resolved into one; and it may be said in one word, that moral inability consists in the opposition or want of inclination. For when a person is unable to will or choose such a thing, through a defect of motives, or prevalence of contrary motives, it is the same thing as his being unable through the want of an inclination, or the prevalence of a contrary inclination, in such circumstances, and under the influence of such views.

To give some instances of this moral inability. A woman of great honour and chastity may have a moral inability to prostitute herself to her slave. A child of great love and duty to his parents, may be unable to be willing to kill his father. A very lascivious man, in case of certain opportunities and temptations, and in the absence of such and such restraints, may be unable to forbear gratifying his lust. A drunkard, under such and such circumstances, may be unable to forbear taking of strong drink. A very malicious man may be unable to exert benevolent acts to an enemy, or to desire his prosperity. Yea, some may be so under the power of a vile disposition, that they may be unable to love those who are most worthy of their esteem and affection. A strong habit of virtue, and great degree of holiness, may cause a moral inability to love wickedness in general, may render a man unable to take complacence in wicked persons or things, or to choose a wicked life, and prefer it to a virtuous life. And, on the other hand, a great degree of habitual wickedness may lay a man under an inability to love and choose holiness, and render him utterly unable to love an infinitely holy Being, or to choose and cleave to Him as his chief good.

Here it may be of use to observe this distinction of moral inability, namely, of that which is general and habitual, and that which is particular and occasional.

By a general and habitual moral inability, I mean an inability in the heart to all exercises or acts of will of that nature or kind, through a fixed and habitual inclination, or an habitual and stated defect, or want of a certain kind of inclination. Thus a very ill-natured man may be unable to exert such acts of benevolence as another, who is full of good nature, commonly exerts; and a man whose heart is habitually void of gratitude may be unable to exert such and such grateful acts, through that stated defect of a grateful inclination. By particular and occasional moral inability, I mean an inability of the will or heart to a particular act, through the strength or defect of present motives, or of inducements presented to the view of the understanding on this occasion. If it be so that the will is always determined by the strongest motive, then it must always have an inability, in this latter sense, to act otherwise than it does; it not being possible, in any case, that the will should at present go against the motive which has now, all things considered, the greatest strength and advantage to excite and induce it. The former of these kinds of moral inability, consisting in that which is stated habitual and general, is most commonly called by the name of inability; because the word inability, in its most proper and original signification has respect to some stated defect. And this especially obtains the name of inability also upon another account. I before observed, that the word inability in its original and most common use, is a relative term, and has respect to will and endeavour, as supposable in the case, and as insufficient to bring to pass the thing desired and endeavoured. Now there may be more of an appearance and shadow of this, with respect to the acts which arise from a fixed and strong habit, than others that arise only from transient occasions and causes. Indeed, will and endeavour against, or diverse from, present acts of the will, are in no case supposable, whether those acts be occasional or habitual; for that would be to suppose the will, at present, to be otherwise than, at present, it is But yet there may be will and endeavour against future acts of the will, or volitions that are likely to take place, as viewed at a distance. It is no contradiction, to suppose that the acts of the will, at one time, may be against the acts of the will at another time; and there may be desires and endeavours to prevent or excite future acts of the will; but such desires and endeavours

are, in many cases, rendered insufficient and vain, through fixedness of habit; when the occasion returns, the strength of habit overcomes, and baffles all such opposition. In this respect, a man may be in miserable slavery and bondage to a strong habit. But it may be comparatively easy to make an alteration with respect to such future acts as are only occasional and transient; because the occasion or transient cause, if foreseen, may often easily be prevented or avoided. On this account, the moral inability that attends fixed habits, especially obtains the name of inability. And then, as the will may remotely and indirectly resist itself, and do it in vain, in the case of strong habits, so reason may resist present acts of the will, and its resistance be insufficient; and this is more commonly the case also, when the acts arise from strong habit.

But it must be observed concerning moral inability, in each kind of it, that the word inability is used in a sense very diverse from its original import. The word signifies only a natural inability, in the proper use of it, and is applied to such cases only wherein a present will or inclination to the thing, with respect to which a person is said to be unable, is supposable. It cannot be truly said, according to the ordinary use of language, that a malicious man, let him be ever so malicious, cannot hold his hand from striking, or that he is not able to show his neighbour kindness; or that a drunkard, let his appetite be ever so strong, cannot keep the cup from his mouth. In the strictest propriety of speech, a man has a thing in his power, if he has it in his choice, or at his election; and a man cannot be truly said to be unable to do a thing, when he can do it if he will. It is improperly said, that a person cannot perform those external actions which are dependent on the act of the will, and which would be easily performed, if the act of the will was present. And if it be improperly said that he cannot perform those external voluntary actions which depend on the will, it is, in some respect, more improperly said that he is unable to exert the acts of the will themselves; because it is more evidently false, with respect to these, that he cannot if he will; for to say so, is a downright contradiction; it is to say, he cannot will, if he does will. And in this case, not only is it true that it is easy for a man to do the thing if he will, but the very willing is the doing; when once he has

willed, the thing is performed, and nothing else remains to be done. Therefore, in these things, to ascribe a non-performance to the want of pover or ability is not just; because the thing wanting is not a being able, but a being willing. There are faculties of mind, and capacity of nature, and everything else sufficient, but a disposition; nothing is wanting but a will.

SECTION V.

Concerning the Notion of Liberty, and of Moral Agency.

The plain and obvious meaning of the words freedom and liberty, in common speech, is power, opportunity, or advantage, that anyone has, to do as he pleases. Or, in other words, his being free from hinderance or impediment in the way of doing or conducting, in any respect, as he wills.* And the contrary to liberty, whatever name we call that by, is a person's being hindered or unable to conduct as he will, or being necessitated to do otherwise.

If this which I have mentioned be the meaning of the word liberty, in the ordinary use of language—as I trust that none that has ever learned to talk, and is unprejudiced, will deny—then it will follow that in propriety of speech, neither liberty, nor its contrary, can properly be ascribed to any being or thing, but that which has such a faculty, power, or property, as is called will. For that which is possessed of no such thing as will, cannot have any power or opportunity of doing according to its will, nor be necessitated to act contrary to its will, nor be restrained from acting agreeably to it. And, therefore, to talk of liberty, or the contrary, as belonging to the very will itself, is not to speak good sense, if we judge of sense and nonsense by the original and proper signification of words. For the will itself is not an agent that has a will. The power of choosing, itself, has not a power of choosing. That which has the power of

* I say not only doing, but conducting; because a voluntary forbearing to do, sitting still, keeping silence, &c., are instances of persons conduct, about which liberty is exercised, though they are not so properly called doing.

volition, or choice, is the man or the soul, and not the power of volition itself. And he that has the liberty of doing according to his will, is the agent or doer, who is possessed of the will, and not the will which he is possessed of. We say with propriety, that a bird let loose has power and liberty to fly; but not that the bird's power of flying has a power and liberty of flying. To be free is the property of an agent who is possessed of powers and faculties, as much as to be cunning, valiant, bountiful, or zealous. But these qualities are the properties of men or persons, and not the properties of properties.

There are two things that are contrary to this which is called liberty in common speech. One is constraint; the same is otherwise called force, compulsion, and co-action, which is a person's being necessitated to do a thing contrary to his will. The other is restraint, which is his being hindered, and not having power to do according to his will. But that which has no will, cannot be the subject of these things. I need say the less on this head, Mr. Locke having set the same thing forth, with so great clearness, in his Essay on the Human Understanding.

But one thing more I would observe concerning what is vulgarly called liberty, namely, that power and opportunity for one to do and conduct as he will, or according to his choice, is all that is meant by it; without taking into the meaning of the word anything of the cause or original of that choice; or at all considering how the person came to have such a volition, whether it was caused by some external motive, or internal habitual bias; whether it was determined by some internal antecedent volition, or whether it happened without a cause; whether it was necessarily connected with something foregoing, or not connected. Let the person come by his volition or choice how he will, yet, if he is able, and there is nothing in the way to hinder his pursuing and executing his will, the man is fully and perfectly free, according to the primary and common notion of freedom.

What has been said may be sufficient to show what is meant by liberty, according to the common notions of mankind, and in the usual and primary acceptation

of the word. But the word, as used by Arminians, Pelagians, and others, who oppose the Calvinists, has an entirely different signification. These several things belong to their notion of liberty. First—That it consists in a self-determining power in the will, or a certain sovereignty the will has over itself and its own acts, whereby it determines its own volitions, so as not to be dependent in its determinations on any cause without itself, nor determined by anything prior to its own acts. Second—Indifference belongs to liberty in their notion of it, or that the mind, previous to the act of volition be, in equilibrio. Third—Contingence is another thing that belongs and is essential to it, not in the common acceptation of the word, as that has been already explained, but as opposed to all necessity, or any fixed and certain connection with some previous ground or reason of its existence. They suppose the essence of liberty so much to consist in these things, that unless the will of man be free in this sense, he has no real freedom, how much soever he may be at liberty to act according to his will.

A moral agent is a being that is capable of those actions that have a moral quality, and which can properly be denominated good or evil in a moral sense, virtuous or vicious, commendable or faulty. To moral agency belongs a moral faculty, or sense of moral good and evil, or of such a thing as desert or worthiness of praise or blame, reward or punishment, and a capacity which an agent has of being influenced in his actions by moral inducements or motives, exhibited to the view of understanding and reason, to engage to a conduct agreeable to the moral faculty.

The sun is very excellent and beneficial in its action and influence on the earth, in warming it, and causing it to bring forth its fruits; but it is not a moral agent; its action, though good, is not virtuous or meritorious. Fire that breaks out in a city, and consumes great part of it, is very mischievous in its operation, but is not a moral agent, what it does is not faulty or sinful, or deserving of any punishment. The brute creatures are not moral agents, the actions of some of them are very profitable and pleasant; others are very hurtful; yet, seeing they have no moral faculty, or sense of desert, and do not act from choice guided by understanding, or

with a capacity of reasoning and reflecting, but only from instinct, and are not capable of being influenced by moral inducements, their actions are not properly sinful or virtuous; nor are they properly the subjects of any such moral treatment for what they do, as moral agents are for their faults or good deeds.

Here it may be noted, that there is a circumstantial difference between the moral agency of a ruler and a subject. I call it circumstantial, because it lies only in the difference of moral inducements they are capable of being influenced by, arising from the difference of circumstances. A ruler acting in that capacity only, is not capable of being influenced by a moral law, and its sanctions of threatenings and promises, rewards and punishments, as the subject is; though both may be influenced by a knowledge of moral good and evil. And, therefore, the moral agency of the Supreme Being, who acts only in the capacity of a ruler towards His creatures, and never as a subject, differs in that respect from the moral agency of created intelligent beings. God's actions, and particularly those which he exerts as a moral governor, have moral qualifications—are morally good in the highest degree. They are most perfectly holy and righteous; and we must conceive of Him as influenced in the highest degree by that which, above all others, is properly a moral inducement—namely, the moral good which He sees in such and such things; and, therefore, He is, in the most proper sense, a moral agent, the source of all moral ability and agency, the fountain and ruler of all virtue and moral good; though by reason of His being Supreme over all, it is not possible He should be under the influence of law or command, promises or threatenings, rewards or punishments, counsels or warnings. The essential qualities of a moral agent are in God in the greatest possible perfection; such as understanding to perceive the difference between moral good and evil; a capacity of discerning that moral worthiness and demerit, by which some things are praiseworthy, others deserving of blame and punishment; and also a capacity of choice, and choice guided by understanding, and a power of acting according to his choice or pleasure, and being capable of doing those things which are in the highest sense praiseworthy. And herein does very much consist that image of God wherein He made man, (which we read of, Gen. i. 26, 27, and chap. ix. 6,) by

which God distinguished man from the beasts, namely, in those faculties and principles of Nature, whereby He is capable of moral agency. Herein very much consists the natural Image of God; as His spirtual and moral Image, wherein man was made at first, consisted in that moral excellency, that he was endowed with.

PART II.

Wherein it is Considered whether there is, or can be, any such Sort of Freedom of Will, as that wherein Arminians place the Essence of the Liberty of all Moral Agents, and whether any such Thing ever was, or can be, conceived of.

SECTION I.

Showing the Manifest Inconsistence of the Arminian Notion of Liberty of Will, consisting in the Will's Self-determining Power.

Having taken notice of those things which may be necessary to be observed, concerning the meaning of the principal terms and phrases made use of in controversies concerning human liberty, and particularly observed what liberty is, according to the common language and general apprehension of mankind, and what it is as understood and maintained by Arminians, I proceed to consider the Arminian notion of the freedom of the will, and the supposed necessity of it in order to moral agency, or in order to any one's being capable of virtue or vice, and properly the subject of command or counsel, praise or blame, promises or threatenings, rewards or punishments; or whether that which has been described as the thing meant by liberty in common speech, be not sufficient, and the only liberty which makes, or can make, any one a moral agent, and so properly the subject of these things. In this part, I shall consider whether any such thing be possible or conceivable as that freedom of will which Arminians insist on; and shall inquire whether any such sort of liberty be necessary to moral agency, &c., in the next part.

And, first of all, I shall consider the notion of a self-determining power in the will; wherein, according to the Arminians, does most essentially consist the will's freedom; and shall particularly inquire, whether it be not plainly absurd, and a manifest inconsistence, to suppose that the will itself determines all the free acts of the will.

Here I shall not insist on the great impropriety of such phrases, and ways of speaking, as the will's determining itself, because actions are to be ascribed to agents, and not properly to the powers of agents; which improper way of speaking leads to many mistakes, and much confusion, as Mr. Locke observes; but I shall suppose that the Arminians, when they speak of the will's determining itself, do by the will mean the soul willing. I shall take it for granted, that when they speak of the will, as the determiner, they mean the soul in the exercise of a power of willing, or acting voluntarily. I shall suppose this to be their meaning, because nothing else can be meant, without the grossest and plainest absurdity. In all cases, when we speak of the powers or principles of acting, as doing such things, we mean that the agents which have these powers of acting do them, in the exercise of those powers. So when we say, valour fights courageously, we mean the man who is under the influence of valour fights courageously. When we say, love seeks the object loved, we mean, the person loving seeks that object. When we say, the understanding discerns, we mean the soul in the exercise of that faculty. So when it is said, the will decides or determines, the meaning must be that the person in the exercise of a power of willing and choosing, or the soul acting voluntarily, determines.

Therefore, if the will determines all its own free acts, the soul determines all the free acts of the will in the exercise of a power of willing and choosing; or, which is the same thing, it determines them of choice; it determines its own acts by choosing its own acts. If the will determines the will, then choice orders and determines the choice; and acts of choice are subject to the decision, and follow the conduct, of other acts of choice; and, therefore, if the will determines all its own free acts, then every free act of choice is determined by a preceding act of choice choosing that act. And if that pre-

ceding act of the will or choice be also a free act, then by these principles, in this act too, the will is self-determined—that is, this, in like manner, is an act that the soul voluntarily chooses; or which is the same thing, it is an act determined still by a preceding act of the will choosing that. And the like may again be observed of the last mentioned act. Which brings us directly to a contradiction; for it supposes an act of the will preceding the first act in the whole train, directing and determining the rest; or a free act of the will, before the first free act of the will. Or else we must come, at last, to an act of the will, determining the consequent acts, wherein the will is not self-determined, and so is not a free act, in this notion of freedom. But if the first act in the train, determining and fixing the rest, be not free, none of them all can be free; as is manifest at first view, but shall be demonstrated presently.

If the will, which we find governs the members of the body, and determines and commands their motions and actions, does also govern itself, and determine its own motions and acts, it doubtless determines them the same way, even by antecedent volitions. The will determines which way the hands and feet shall move, by an act of volition or choice; and there is no other way of the will's determining, directing, or commanding anything at all. Whatsoever the will commands, it commands by an act of the will; and if it has itself under its command, and determines itself in its own acts, it doubtless does it the same way that it determines other things which are under its command. So that if the freedom of the will consists in this, that it has itself and its own acts under its command and direction, and its own volitions are determined by itself, it will follow, that every free volition arises from another antecedent volition, directing and commanding that; and if that directing volition be also free, in that also the will is determined—that is to say, that directing volition is determined by another going before that, and so on, until we come to the first volition in the whole series; and if that first volition be free, and the will self-determined in it, then that is determined by another volition preceding that. Which is a contradiction; because, by the supposition, it can have none before it to direct or determine it, being the first in the train. But if that first volition is not determined by any preceding act of the will, then that act is not

determined by the will, and so is not free, in the Arminian notion of freedom, which consists in the will's self-determination. And if that first act of the will, which determines and fixes the subsequent acts, be not free, none of the following acts, which are determined by it, can be free. If we suppose there are five acts in the train, the fifth and last determined by the fourth, and the fourth by the third, the third by the second, and the second by the first; if the first is not determined by the will, and so not free, then none of them are truly determined by the will—that is, that each of them is as it is, and not otherwise, is not first owing to the will, but to the determination of the first in the series, which is not dependent on the will, and is that which the will has no hand in the determination of. And this being that which decides what the rest shall be, and determines their existence; therefore the first determination of their existence is not from the will. The case is just the same, if instead of a chain of five acts of the will, we should suppose a succession of ten, or an hundred, or ten thousand. If the first act be not free, being determined by something out of the will, and this determines the next to be agreeable to itself, and that the next, and so on, they are none of them free, but all originally depend on, and are determined by, some cause out of the will; and so all freedom in the case is excluded, and no act of the will can be free, according to this notion of freedom. If we should suppose a long chain of ten thousand links, so connected that if the first link moves, it will move the next, and that the next, and so on, till the whole chain is determined to motion, and in the direction of its motion, by the motion of the first link, and that is moved by something else; in this case, though all the links but one are moved by other parts of the same chain, yet it appears that neither the motion of any one, nor the direction of its motion, is from any self-moving or self-determining power in the chain, any more than if every link were immediately moved by something that did not belong to the chain. If the will be not free in the first act, which causes the next, then neither is it free in the next, which is caused by that first act; for though, indeed, the will caused it, yet it did not cause it freely, because the preceding act, by which it was caused, was not free. And, again, if the will be not free in the second act, so neither can it be in the third, which is caused by that; because, in like manner, that third was

determined by an act of the will that was not free. And so we may go on to the next act, and from that to the next; and how long soever the succession of acts is, it is all one; if the first on which the whole chain depends, and which determines all the rest, be not a free act, the will is not free in causing or determining any one of those acts, because the act by which it determines them all, is not a free act, and, therefore, the will is no more free in determining them, than if it did not cause them at all. Thus this Arminian notion of liberty of the will, consisting in the will's self-determination, is repugnant to itself, and shuts itself wholly out of the world.

SECTION II.

Several supposed Ways of Evading the Foregoing Reasoning considered.

If to evade the force of what has been observed, it should be said, that when the Arminians speak of the will's determining its own acts, they do not mean that the will determines its acts by any preceding act, or that one act of the will determines another, but only that the faculty, or power of will, or the soul in the use of that power, determines its own volitions; and that it does it without any act going before the act determined; such an evasion would be full of the most gross absurdity. I confess it is an evasion of my own inventing; and I do not know but I should wrong the Arminians in supposing that any of them would make use of it. But it being as good a one as I can invent, I would observe upon it a few things:—

First—If the faculty or power of the will determines an act of volition, or the soul in the use or exercise of that power, determines it, that is the same thing as for the soul to determine volition by an act of will. For an exercise of the power of will, and an act of that power, are the same thing. Therefore, to say, that the power of will, or the soul in the use or exercise of that power, determines volition, without an act of will preceding the volition determined, is a contradiction.

Secondly—If a power of will determines the act of the will, then a power of choosing determines it. For, as was before observed, in every act of will there is choice, and a power of willing is a power of choosing. But if a power of choosing determines the act of volition, it determines it by choosing it. For it is most absurd to say that a power of choosing determines one thing rather than another, without choosing any thing. But if a power of choosing determines volition by choosing it, then here is the act of volition determined by an antecedent choice, choosing that volition.

Thirdly—To say the faculty, or the soul, determines its own volition, but not by any act, is a contradiction. Because for the soul to direct, decide, or determine any thing, is to act; and this is supposed; for the soul is here spoken of as being a cause in this affair, bringing something to pass, or doing something, or, which is the same thing, exerting itself in order to an effect, which effect is the determination of volition, or the particular kind and manner of an act of will. But, certainly, this exertion or action is not the same with the effect, in order to the production of which it is exerted, but must be something prior to it.

Again, the advocates for this notion of the freedom of the will, speak of a certain sovereignty in the will, whereby it has power to determine its own volitions; and, therefore, the determination of volition must itself be an act of the will; for otherwise it can be no exercise of that supposed power and sovereignty.

Again, if the will determines itself, then either the will is active in determining its volitions, or it is not. If it be active in it, then the determination is an act of the will; and so there is one act of the will determining another. But if the will is not active in the determination, then how does it exercise any liberty in it? These gentlemen suppose that the thing wherein the will exercises liberty, is in its determining its own acts; but how can this be, if it be not active in determining? Certainly the will, or the soul, cannot exercise any liberty in that wherein it does not act, or wherein it does not exercise itself. So that if either part of this dilemma be taken, this scheme of liberty, consisting in self-determining power, is overthrown. If there be an act of the will in

determining all its own free acts, then one free act of the will is determined by another; and so we have the absurdity of every free act, even the very first, determined by a foregoing free act. But if there be no act or exercise of the will in determining its own acts, then no liberty is exercised in determining them. From whence it follows, that no liberty consists in the will's power to determine its own acts; or, which is the same thing, that there is no such thing as liberty consisting in a self-determining power of the will.

If it should be said, that although it be true, if the soul determines its own volitions, it must be active in so doing, and the determination itself must be an act, yet there is no need of supposing this act to be prior to the volition determined; but the will or soul determines the act of the will in willing; it determines its own volition, in the very act of volition; it directs and limits the act of the will, causing it to be so, and not otherwise, in exerting the act, without any preceding act to exert that. If any should say after this manner, they must mean one or these three things—either, firstly, that the determining act, though it be before the act determined in the order of nature, yet is not before it in order of time. Or, secondly, that the determining act is not before the act detemined, either in the order of time or nature, nor is truly distinct from it; but that the soul's determining the act of volition is the same thing with its exerting the act of volition; the mind's exerting such a particular act, is its causing and determining the act. Or, thirdly, that volition has no cause, and is no effect, but comes into existence with such a particular determination, without any ground or reason of its existence and determination. I shall consider these distinctly.

Firstly—If all that is meant be, that the determining act is not before the act determined in order of time, it will not help the case at all, though it should be allowed. If it be before the determined act in the order of nature, being the cause or ground of its existence, this as much proves it to be distinct from it, and independent on it, as if it were before in the order of time; as the cause of the particular motion of a natural body in a certain direction, may have no distance as to time, yet cannot be the same with the motion effected by it, but must be as distinct from it as any other cause, that

is before its effect in the order of time—as the architect is distinct from the house which he builds, or the father distinct from the son which he begets. And if the act of the will determining be distinct from the act determined, and before it in the order of nature, then we can go back from one to another, until we come to the first in the series, which has no act of the will before it in the order of nature, determining it, and consequently is an act not determined by the will, and so not a free act, in this notion of freedom. And this being the act which determines all the rest, none of them are free acts. As when there is a chain of many links, the first of which only is taken hold of and drawn by hand; all the rest may follow and be moved at the same instant, without any distance of time, but yet the motion of one link is before that of another in the order of nature; the last is moved by the next, and that by the next, and so till we come to the first; which not being moved by any other, but by something distinct from the whole chain, this as much proves that no part is moved by any self-moving power in the chain, as if the motion of one link followed that of another in the order of time.

Secondly—If any should say, that the determining act is not before the determined act, either in the order of time, or of nature, nor is distinct from it, but that the exertion of the act is the determination of the act—that for the soul to exert a particular volition, is for it to cause and determine that act of volition—I would on this observe, that the thing in question seems to be forgotten, or kept out of sight, in a darkness and unintelligibleness of speech; unless such an objector would mean to contradict himself. The very act of volition itself is doubtless a determination of mind; *i. e.*, it is the mind's drawing up a conclusion, or coming to a choice between two things, or more, proposed to it. But determining among external objects of choice, is not the same with determining the act of choice itself among various possible acts of choice. The question is, what influences, directs, or determines the mind or will to come to such a conclusion or choice as it does? or, what is the cause, ground, or reason, why it concludes thus, and not otherwise? Now, it must be answered, according to the Arminian notion of freedom, that the will influences, orders, and determines itself thus to act. And if it does, I say, it must be by some antecedent act.

To say it is caused, influenced, and determined by something, and yet not determined by anything antecedent, either in order of time or nature, is a contradiction. For that is what is meant by a thing's being prior in the order of nature, that it is some way the cause or reason of the thing, with respect to which it is said to be prior.

If the particular act or exertion of will, which comes into existence, be any thing properly determined at all, then it has some cause of its existing, and of its existing in such a particular determinate manner, and not another; some cause whose influence decides the matter, which cause is distinct from the effect, and prior to it. But to say, that the will or mind orders, influences, and determines itself to exert such an act as it does, by the very exertion itself, is to make the exertion both cause and effect, or the exerting such an act, to be a cause of the exertion of such an act. For the question is, what is the cause and reason of the soul exerting such an act? To which the answer is, the soul exerts such an act, and that is the cause of it. And so, by this, the exertion must be prior in the order of nature to itself, and distinct from itself.

Thirdly—If the meaning be that the soul's exertion of such a particular act of will, is a thing that comes to pass of itself, without any cause, and that there is absolutely no ground or reason of the soul's being determined to exert such a volition, and make such a choice, rather than another, I say, if this be the meaning of Arminians, when they contend so earnestly for the will's determining its own acts, and for liberty of will consisting in self-determining power, they do nothing but confound themselves and others with words, without a meaning. In the question, what determines the will? and in their answer, that the will determines itself, and in all the dispute about it, it seems to be taken for granted, that something determines the will; and the controversy on this head is not, whether anything at all determines it, or whether its determination has any cause or foundation at all, but where the foundation of it is; whether in the will itself, or somewhere else. But if the thing intended be what is above mentioned, then all comes to this, that nothing at all determines the will; volition having absolutely no cause or foundation of its existence, either within, or without. There is a

great noise made about self-determining power, as the source of all free acts of the will; but when the matter comes to be explained, the meaning is, that no power at all is the source of these acts, neither self-determining power nor any other, but they arise from nothing; no cause, no power, no influence being at all concerned in the matter.

However, this very thing, even that the free acts of the will are events which come to pass without a cause, is certainly implied in the Arminian notion of liberty of will, though it be very inconsistent with many other things in their scheme, and repugnant to some things implied in their notion of liberty. Their opinion implies, that the particular determination of volition is without any cause, because they hold the free acts of the will to be contingent events, and contingence is essential to freedom in their notion of it. But, certainly, those things which have a prior ground and reason of their particular existence, a cause which antecedently determines them to be, and determines them to be just as they are, does not happen contingently, If something foregoing, by a causal influence and connection, determines and fixes precisely their coming to pass, and the manner of it, then it does not remain a contingent thing whether they shall come to pass or no.

And because it is a question, in many respects very important in this controversy about the freedom of will, whether the free acts of the will are events which come to pass without a cause? I shall be particular in examining this point in the two following sections.

SECTION III.

WHETHER ANY EVENT WHATSOEVER, AND VOLITION IN PARTICULAR, CAN COME TO PASS WITHOUT A CAUSE OF ITS EXISTENCE.

BEFORE I enter on any argument on this subject, I would explain how I would be understood, when I use the word cause in this discourse; since, for want of a better word, I shall have occasion to use it in a sense which is more extensive, than that in which it is sometimes used. The word is often used in so restrained a sense as to signify only that which has a positive efficiency or influence to produce a thing, or bring it to pass. But there are many things which have no such positive productive influence, which yet are causes in that respect, that they have truly the nature of a ground or reason why some things are, rather than others, or why they are as they are, rather than otherwise. Thus the absence of the sun in the night is not the cause of the falling of the dew at that time, in the same manner as its beams are the cause of the ascending of the vapours in the day-time; and its withdrawment in the winter, is not in the same manner the cause of the freezing of the waters, as its approach in the spring is the cause of their thawing. But yet the withdrawment, or absence, of the sun is an antecedent, with which these effects in the night and winter are connected, and on which they depend; and is one thing that belongs to the ground and reason why they come to pass at that time, rather than at other times; though the absence of the sun is nothing positive, nor has any positive influence.

It may be further observed, that when I speak of connection of causes and effects, I have respect to moral causes, as well as those that are called natural in distinction from them. Moral causes may be causes in as proper a sense as any causes whatsoever—may have as real an influence, and may as truly be the ground and reason of an event's coming to pass.

Therefore, I sometimes use the word cause, in this inquiry, to signify any antecedent, either natural or moral, positive or negative, on which an event, either a

thing, or the manner and circumstance of a thing, so depends, that it is the ground and reason, either in whole, or in part, why it is, rather than not, or why it is as it is, rather than otherwise; or, in other words, any antecedent with which a consequent event is so connected that it truly belongs to the reason why the proposition which affirms that event, is true, whether it has any positive influence, or not. And in an agreeableness to this, I sometimes use the word effect, for the consequence of another thing, which is perhaps rather an occasion than a cause, most properly speaking.

I am the more careful thus to explain my meaning, that I may cut off occasion, from any that might seek occasion to cavil and object against some things which I may say concerning the dependence of all things which come to pass on some cause, and their connection with their cause.

Having thus explained what I mean by cause, I assert that nothing ever comes to pass without a cause. What is self-existent must be from eternity, and must be unchangeable; but as to all things that begin to be, they are not self-existent, and, therefore, must have some foundation of their existence without themselves. That whatsoever begins to be, which before was not, must have a cause why it then begins to exist, seems to be the first dictate of the common and natural sense which God hath implanted in the minds of all mankind, and the main foundation of all our reasonings about the existence of things, past, present, or to come.

And this dictate of common sense equally respects substances and modes, or things and the manner and circumstances of things. Thus, if we see a body which has hitherto been at rest, start out of a state of rest, and begin to move, we do as naturally and necessarily suppose there is some cause or reason of this new mode of existence, as of the existence of a body itself which had hitherto not existed. And so if a body, which had hitherto moved in a certain direction, should suddenly change the direction of its motion, or if it should put off its old figure, and take a new one, or change its colour, the beginning of these new modes is a new event, and the mind of mankind necessarily supposes that there is some cause or reason of them.

If this grand principle of common sense be taken away, all arguing from effects to causes ceaseth, and so all knowledge of any existence, besides what we have by the most direct and immediate intuition. Particularly all our proof of the being of God ceases. We argue His being from our own being, and the being of other things which we are sensible once were not, but have begun to be; and from the being of the world, with all its constituent parts, and the manner of their existence; all which we see plainly are not necessary in their own nature, and so not self-existent, and, therefore, must have a cause. But if things, not in themselves necessary, may begin to be without a cause, all this arguing is vain.

Indeed, I will not affirm, that there is in the nature of things no foundation for the knowledge of the being of God, without any evidence of it from His works. I do suppose there is a great absurdity, in the nature of things simply considered, in supposing that there should be no God, or in denying being in general, and supposing an eternal, absolute, universal nothing; and, therefore, that here would be foundation of intuitive evidence that it cannot be, and that eternal infinite most perfect being must be, if we had strength and comprehension of mind sufficient to have a clear idea of general and universal being, or, which is the same thing, of the infinite, eternal, most perfect divine nature and essence. But then we should not properly come to the knowledge of the being of God by arguing; but our evidence would be intuitive; we should see it, as we see other things that are necessary in themselves, the contraries of which are in there own nature absurd and contradictory; as we see that twice two is four, and as we see that a circle has no angles. If we had as clear an idea of universal infinite entity as we have of these other things, I suppose we should most intuitively see the absurdity of supposing such being not to be—should immediately see there is no room for the question, whether is it possible that being, in the most general abstracted notion of it, should not be? But we have not that strength and extent of mind to know this certainly in this intuitive independent manner; but the way that mankind come to the knowledge of the being of God, is that which the Apostle speaks of, Rom. i., 20:—"The invisible things of Him, from

the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even His eternal power and Godhead." We first ascend, and prove *a posteriori*, or from effects, that there must be an eternal cause; and then, secondly, prove by argumentation, not intuition, that this being must be necessarily existent; and then, thirdly, from the proved necessity of his existence, we may descend, and prove many of his perfections *a priori*.

But if once this grand principle of common sense be given up, that what is not necessary in itself, must have a cause, and we begin to maintain that things may come into existence, and begin to be, which heretofore have not been of themselves, without any cause, all our means of ascending in our arguing from the creature to the Creator, and all our evidence of the being of God, is cut off at one blow. In this case, we cannot prove that there is a God, either from the being of the world, and the creatures in it, or from the manner of their being, their order, beauty, and use. For if things may come into existence without any cause at all, then they doubtless may without any cause answerable to the effect. Our minds do alike naturally suppose and determine both these things—namely, that what begins to be has a cause, and also that it has a cause proportionable and agreeable to the effect. The same principle which leads us to determine that there cannot be anything coming to pass without a cause, leads us to determine that there cannot be more in the effect than in the cause.

Yea, if once it should be allowed that things may come to pass without a cause, we should not only have no proof of the being of God, but we should be without evidence of the existence of anything whatsoever, but our own immediately present ideas and conciousness. For we have no way to prove anything else but by arguing from effects to causes; from the ideas now immediately in view, we argue other things not immediately in view; from sensations now excited in us, we infer the existence of things without us, as the causes of these sensations, and from the existence of these things, we argue other things, which they depend on, as effects on causes. We infer the past existence of ourselves, or anything else, by memory, only as we argue that the ideas which are now in our minds are the conse-

quences of past ideas and sensations. We immediately perceive nothing else but the ideas which are this moment extant in our minds. We perceive or know other things only by means of these, as necessarily connected with others, and dependent on them. But if things may be without causes, all this necessary connection and dependance is dissolved, and so all means of our knowledge is gone. If there be no absurdity or difficulty in supposing one thing to start out of non-existence into being of itself without a cause, then there is no absurdity or difficulty in supposing the same of millions of millions. For nothing, or no difficulty, multiplied, still is nothing, or no difficulty; nothing multiplied by nothing, does not increase the sum.

And, indeed, according to the hypothesis I am opposing, of the acts of the will coming to pass without a cause, it is the case in fact, that millions of millions of events are continually coming into existence contingently, without any cause or reason why they do so, all over the world, every day and hour, through all ages. So it is in a constant succession, in every moral agent. This contingency, this efficient nothing, this effectual no-cause, is always ready at hand, to produce this sort of effects, as long as the agent exists, and as often as he has occasion.

If it were so, that things only of one kind, namely, acts of the will, seemed to come to pass of themselves, but those of this sort in general came into being thus, and it were an event that was continual, and that happened in a course, wherever were capable subjects of such events, this very thing would demonstrate that there was some cause of them, which made such a difference between this event and others, and that they did not really happen contingently. For contingence is blind, and does not pick and chose for a particular sort of events. Nothing has no choice. This no-cause, which causes no existence, cannot cause the existence which comes to pass to be of one particular sort only, distinguished from all others. Thus, that only one sort of matter drops out of the heavens, even water, and that this comes so often, so constantly and plentifully, all over the world, in all ages, shows that there is some cause or reason of the falling of water out of the heavens; and that something besides mere contingence has a hand in the matter.

If we should suppose nonentity to be about to bring forth, and things were coming into existence without any cause or antecedent on which the existence, or kind or manner of existence, depends, or which could at all determine whether the things should be stones, or stars, or beasts, or angels, or human bodies, or souls, or only some new motion or figure in natural bodies, or some new sensations in animals, or new ideas in the human understanding, or new volitions in the will, or anything else of all the infinite number of posssibles; then certainly it would not be expected, although many millions of millions of things are coming into existence in this manner, all over the face of the earth, that they should all be only of one particular kind, and that it should be thus in all ages, and that this sort of existences should never fail to come to pass where there is room for them, or a subject capable of them, and that constantly, whenever there is occasion for them.

If any should imagine there is something in the sort of event that renders it possible for it to come into existence without a cause, and should say that the free acts of the will are existences of an exceeding different nature from other things, by reason of which they may come into existence without any previous ground or reason of it, though other things cannot; if they make this objection in good earnest, it would be an evidence of their strangely forgetting themselves, for they would be giving an account of some ground of the existence of a thing, when at the same time they would maintain there is no ground of its existence. Therefore, I would observe, that the particular nature of existence, be it ever so diverse from others, can lay no foundation for that thing's coming into existence without a cause, because to suppose this, would be to suppose the particular nature of existence to be a thing prior to the existence; and so a thing which makes way for existence, with such a circumstance, namely, without a cause or reason of existence; but that which in any respect makes way for a thing's coming into being, or for any manner or circumstance of its first existence, must be prior to the existence. The distinguished nature of the effect, which is something belonging to the effect, cannot have influence backward, to act before it is. The peculiar nature of that thing called volition, can do nothing, can have no influence, while it is not. And afterwards it is

too late for its influence, for then the thing has made sure of existence already, without its help.

So that it is, indeed, as repugnant to reason, to suppose that an act of the will should come into existence without a cause, as to suppose the human soul, or an angel, or the globe of the earth, or the whole universe, should come into existence without a cause. And if once we allow that such a sort of effect as a volition may come to pass without a cause, how do we know but that many other sorts of effects may do so too? It is not the particular kind of effect that makes the absurdity of supposing it has being without a cause, but something which is common to all things that ever begin to be, namely, that they are not self-existent, or necessary in the nature of things.

SECTION IV.

Whether Volition can arise without a cause, through the Activity of the Nature of the Soul.

The author of the Essay on the Freedom of the Will in God and the Creatures, in answer to that objection against his doctrine of a self-determining power in the will, (p. 68, 69,) that nothing is, or comes to pass, without a sufficient reason why it is, and why it is in this manner rather than another, allows that it is thus in corporeal things, which are properly and philosophically speaking passive beings, but denies that it is thus in spirits, which are beings of an active nature, who have the spring of action within themselves, and can determine themselves. By which it is plainly supposed that such an event as an act of the will, may come to pass, in a spirit, without a sufficient reason why it comes to pass, or why it is after this manner, rather than another, by reason of the activity of the nature of a spirit. But certainly this author in this matter must be very unwary and inadvertent. For,

Firstly—The objection or difficulty proposed by this author seems to be forgotten in his answer or solution. The very difficulty, as he himself proposes it, is this,

how an event can come to pass without a sufficient reason why it is, or why it is in this manner rather than another? Instead of solving this difficulty, or answering this question with regard to volition, as he proposes, he forgets himself, and answers another question quite diverse, and wholly inconsistent with this, namely, what is a sufficient reason why it is, and why it is in this manner rather than another? and he assigns the active being's own determination as the cause, and a cause sufficient for the effect; and leaves all the difficulty unresolved, and the question unanswered, which yet returns, even, how the soul's own determination, which he speaks of, came to exist, and to be what it was without a cause? The activity of the soul may enable it to be the cause of effects, but it does not at all enable or help it to be the subject of effects which have no cause; which is the thing this author supposes concerning acts of the will. Activity of nature will no more enable a being to produce effects, and determine the manner of their existence, within itself, without a cause, than out of itself, in some other being. But if an active being should, through its activity, produce and determine an effect in some external object, how absurd it would be to say that the effect was produced without a cause.

Secondly—The question is not so much how a spirit endowed with activity comes to act, as why it exerts such an act, and not another, or why it acts with such a particular determination? If activity of nature be the cause why a spirit (the soul of man for instance) acts, and does not lie still, yet that alone is not the cause why its action is thus and thus limited, directed and determined. Active nature is a general thing; it is an ability or tendency of nature to action generally taken, which may be a cause why the soul acts as occasion or reason is given; but this alone cannot be a sufficient cause why the soul exerts such a particular act, at such a time, rather than others. In order to this, there must be something besides a general tendency to action; there must also be a particular tendency to that individual action. If it should be asked, why the soul of man uses its activity in such a manner as it does, and it should be answered, that the soul uses its activity thus, rather than otherwise, because it has activity; would such an answer satisfy a rational man? Would it not rather be looked upon as a very impertinent one?

Thirdly—An active being can bring no effects to pass by his activity, but what are consequent upon his acting; he produces nothing by his activity, any other way than by the exercise of his activity, and so nothing but the fruits of its exercise; he brings nothing to pass by a dormant activity. But the exercise of his activity is action; and so his action or exercise of his activity must be prior to the effects of his activity. If an active being produces an effect in another being, about which his activity is conversant, the effect being the fruit of his activity, his activity must be first exercised or exerted, and the effect of it must follow. So it must be, with equal reason, if the active being is his own object, and his activity is conversant about himself, to produce and determine some effect in himself; still the exercise of his activity must go before the effect, which he brings to pass and determines by it. And, therefore, his activity cannot be the cause of the determination of the first action, or exercise of activity itself, whence the effects of activity arise, for that would imply a contradiction; it would be to say, the first exercise of activity is before the first exercise of activity, and is the cause of it.

Fourthly—That the soul, though an active substance, cannot diversify its own acts, but by first acting, or be a determining cause of different acts, or any different effects, sometimes of one kind, and somtimes of another, any other way than in consequence of its own diverse acts, is manifest by this; that if so, then the same cause, the same causal power, force, or influence, without variation in any respect, would produce different effects at different times. For the same substance of the soul before it acts, and the same active nature of the soul before it is exerted (*i. e.* before in the order of nature) would be the cause of different effects, namely, different volitions at different times. But the substance of the soul before it acts, and its active nature before it is exerted, are the same without variation. For it is some act that makes the first variation in the cause, as to any causal exertion, force, or influence. But if it be so, that the soul has no different causality, or diverse causal force or influence, in producing these diverse effects, then it is evident that the soul has no influence, no hand in the diversity of the effect, and that the difference of the effect cannot be owing to anything in the soul; or, which is the same thing, the soul does

not determine the diversity of the effect; which is contrary to the supposition. It is true the substance of the soul before it acts, and before there is any difference in that respect, may be in a different state and circumstances; but those whom I oppose will not allow the different circumstances of the soul to be the determining causes of the acts of the will, as being contrary to their notion of self-determination and self-motion.

Fifthly—Let us suppose, as these divines do, that there are no acts of the soul, strictly speaking, but free volitions; then it will follow, that the soul is an active being in nothing further than it is a voluntary or elective being, and whenever it produces effects actively, it produces effects voluntarily and electively. But to produce effects thus, is the same thing as to produce effects in consequence of, and according to, its own choice. And if so, then surely the soul does not by its activity produce all its own acts of will or choice themselves; for this, by the supposition, is to produce all its free acts of choice voluntarily and electively, or in consequence of its own free acts of choice, which brings the matter directly to the fore-mentioned contradiction, of a free act of choice before the first free act of choice. According to these gentlemen's own notion of action, if there arises in the mind a volition without a free act of the will or choice to determine and produce it, the mind is not the active voluntary cause of that volition, because it does not arise from, nor is regulated by, choice or design. And, therefore, it cannot be that the mind should be the active, voluntary, determining cause of the first and leading volition that relates to the affair. The mind's being a designing cause, only enables it to produce effects in consequence of its design; it will not enable it to be the designing cause of all its own designs. The mind's being an elective cause, will only enable it to produce effects in consequence of its elections, and according to them, but cannot enable it to be the elective cause of all its own elections, because that supposes an election before the first election. So the mind's being an active cause enables it to produce effects in consequence of its own acts, but cannot enable it it be the determining cause of all its own acts; for that is still in the same manner a contradiction, as it supposes a determining act conversant about the first act, and prior to it, having a causal influence on its existence, and manner of existence.

I can conceive of nothing else that can be meant by the soul's having power to cause and determine its own volitions, as a being to whom God has given a power of action, but this—that God has given power to the soul, sometimes at least, to excite volitions at its pleasure, or according as it chooses. And this, certainly, supposes, in all such cases, a choice preceding all volitions which are thus caused, even the first of them. Which runs into the fore-mentioned great absurdity.

Therefore, the activity of the nature of the soul affords no relief from the difficulties which the notion of a self-determining power in the will is attended with, nor will it help, in the least, its absurdities and inconsistencies.

SECTION V.

SHOWING THAT IF THE THINGS ASSERTED IN THESE EVASIONS SHOULD BE SUPPOSED TO BE TRUE, THEY ARE ALTOGETHER IMPERTINENT, AND CANNOT HELP THE CAUSE OF ARMINIAN LIBERTY; AND HOW (THIS BEING THE STATE OF THE CASE) ARMINIAN WRITERS ARE OBLIGED TO TALK INCONSISTENTLY.

WHAT was last observed in the preceding section, may show, not only that the active nature of the soul cannot be a reason why an act of the will is, or why it is in this manner, rather than another, but also that if it could be so, and it could be proved that volitions are contingent events, in that sense, that their being and manner of being is not fixed or determined by any cause, or anything antecedent, it would not at all serve the purpose of Arminians, to establish the freedom of the will, according to their notion of its freedom, as consisting in the will's determination of itself; which supposes every free act of the will to be determined by some act of the will going before to determine it; in as much as for the will to determine a thing, is the same as for the soul to determine a thing by willing; for there is no way that the will can determine an act of the will, but by willing that act of the will, or, which is the same thing, choosing it. So that here must be two acts of the will in the case, one going before another, one conversant about the other

and the latter the object of the former, and chosen by the former. If the will does not cause and determine the act by choice, it does not cause or determine it at all; for that which is not determined by choice, is not determined voluntarily or willingly; and to say, that the will determines something which the soul does not determine willingly, is as much as to say, that something is done by the will which the soul does not do with its will.

So that if Arminian liberty of will, consisting in the will's determining its own acts, be maintained, the old absurdity and contradiction must be maintained, that every free act of will is caused and determined by a foregoing free act of will; which does not consist with the free act's arising without any cause, and being so contingent, as not to be fixed by any thing foregoing. So that this evasion must be given up, as not at all relieving, and as that which, instead of supporting this sort of liberty, directly destroys it.

And if it should be supposed that the soul determines its own acts of will some other way, than by a foregoing act of will; still it will not help the cause of their liberty of will. If it determines them by an act of the understanding, or some other power, then the will does not determine itself; and so the self-determining power of the will is given up. And what liberty is there exercised, according to their own opinion of liberty, by the soul's being determined by somthing besides its own choice? The acts of the will, it is true, may be directed, and effectually determined and fixed; but it is not done by the soul's own will and pleasure; there is no exercise at all of choice or will in producing the effect; and if will and choice are not exercised in it, how is the liberty of the will exercised in it?

So that let Arminians turn which way they please with their notion of liberty, consisting in the will's determining its own acts, their notion destroys itself. If they hold every free act of will to be determined by the soul's own free choice, or foregoing free act of will—foregoing either in the order of time, or nature—it implies that gross contradiction, that the first free act belonging to the affair is determined by a free act which is before it. Or if they say that the free acts of the will are determined

by some other act of the soul, and not an act of will or choice, this also destroys their notion of liberty, consisting in the acts of the will being determined by the will itself. Or if they hold that the acts of the will are determined by nothing at all that is prior to them, but that they are contingent in that sense, that they are determined and fixed by no cause at all, this also destroys their notion of liberty, consisting in the will's determining its own acts.

This being the true state of the Arminian notion of liberty, it hence comes to pass, that the writers that defend it are forced into gross inconsistencies in what they say upon this subject. To instance in Dr. Whitby; he, in his discourse on the freedom of the will,* opposes the opinion of the Calvinists, who place man's liberty only in a power of doing what he will, as that wherein they plainly agree with Mr. Hobbes; and yet he himself mentions the very same notion of liberty, as the dictate of the sense and common reason of mankind, and a rule laid down by the light of nature; namely, that liberty is a power of acting from ourselves, or *doing what we will.*† This is, indeed, as he says, a thing agreeable to the sense and common reason of mankind, and, therefore, it is not so much to be wondered at that he unawares acknowledges it against himself; for if liberty does not consist in this, what else can be devised that it should consist in? If it be said, as Dr. Whitby elsewhere insists, that it does not only consist in liberty of doing what we will, but also a liberty of willing without necessity, still the question returns, what does that liberty of willing without necessity consist in but in a power of willing as we please, without being impeded by a contrary necessity? or, in other words, a liberty for the soul in its willing to act according to its own choice? Yea, this very thing the same author seems to allow, and suppose again and again, in the use he makes of sayings of the Fathers, whom he quotes as his vouchers. Thus he cites the words of Origen, which he produces as a testimony on his side ‡—"The soul acts by *her own choice,* and it is free for her to incline to whatever part *she will.*" And those words of Justin Martyr§—"The doctrine of the Christians is this, that nothing is done or suffered

* In his Book on the Five Points, second edit. p. 350, 351, 352.

† Ibid. p. 325, 326. ‡ Ibid. p. 342. § Ibid. p. 360.

according to fate, but that every man doth good or evil *according to his own free choice.*" And from Eusebius, these words *—"If fate be established, philosophy and piety are overthrown. All these things depending upon the necessity introduced by the stars, and not upon meditation and exercise *proceeding from our own free choice.*" And again, the words of Maccarius †—"God, to preserve the liberty of man's will, suffered their bodies to die, that it might be *in their choice* to turn to good or evil. They who are acted by the Holy Spirit, are not held under any necessity, but have liberty to turn themselves, and *do what they will* in this life."

Thus, the Doctor, in effect, comes into that very notion of liberty which the Calvinists have, which he, at the same time, condemns, as agreeing with the opinion of Mr. Hobbes—namely, the soul's acting by its own choice, men's doing good or evil according to their own free choice, their being in that exercise which proceeds from their own free choice, having it in their choice to turn to good or evil, and doing what they will. So that if men exercise this liberty in the acts of the will themselves, it must be in exerting acts of will as they will, or according to their own free choice; or exerting acts of will that proceed from their choice. And if it be so, then let every one judge whether this does not suppose a free choice going before the free act of the will, or whether an act of choice does not go before that act of the will which proceeds from it. And if it be thus with all free acts of the will, then let every one judge, whether it will not follow that there is a free choice or will going before the first free act of the will exerted in the case. And then let every one judge, whether this be not a contradiction. And, finally, let every one judge whether in the scheme of these writers there be any possibility of avoiding these absurdities.

If liberty consists, as Dr. Whitby himself says, in a man's doing what he will, and a man exercises this liberty, not only in external actions, but in the acts of the will themselves, then so far as liberty is exercised in the latter, it consists in willing what he wills; and if any say so, one of these two things must be meant, either,

* In his Book on the Five Points, second edit. p. 363.

† Ibid, p. 369, 370.

firstly, that a man has power to will, as he does will, because what he wills, he wills; and, therefore, has power to will what he has power to will. If this be their meaning, then all this mighty controversy about freedom of the will and self-determining power comes wholly to nothing; all that is contended for being no more than this, that the mind of man does what it does, and is the subject of what it is the subject of, or that what is, is; wherein none has any controversy with them. Or, secondly, the meaning must be, that a man has power to will as he pleases or chooses to will—that is, he has power by one act of choice, to choose another; by an antecedent act of will to choose a consequent act; and therein to execute his own choice. And if this be their meaning, it is nothing but shuffling with those they dispute with, and baffling their own reason. For still the question returns, wherein lies man's liberty in that antecedent act of will which choose the consequent act. The answer according to the same principles must be, that his liberty in this also lies in his willing as he would, or as he choose, or agreeable to another act of choice preceding that. And so the question returns, *in infinitum*, and the like answer must be made *in infinitum*; in order to support their opinion, there must be no beginning, but free acts of will must have been chosen by foregoing free acts of will, in the soul of every man, without beginning, and so before he had a being, from all eternity.

SECTION VI.

Concerning the Will's determining in Things which are perfectly indifferent, in the View of the Mind.

A great argument for self-determining power is the supposed experience we universally have of an ability to determine our wills, in cases wherein no prevailing motive is presented; the will (as is supposed) has its choice to make between two or more things, that are perfectly equal in the view of the mind; and the will is apparently altogether indifferent; and yet we find no difficulty in coming to a choice; the will can instantly

determine itself to one, by a sovereign power which it has over itself, without being moved by any preponderating inducement.

Thus the forementioned author of an Essay on the Freedom of the Will, &c., (pages 25, 26, 27), supposes—"That there are many instances wherein the will is determined neither by present uneasiness, nor by the greatest apparent good, nor by the last dictate of the understanding, nor by any thing else, but merely by itself, as a sovereign self-determining power of the soul; and that the soul does not will this or that action, in some cases, by any other other influence, but because it will. Thus (says he) I can turn my face to the south, or the north; I can point with my finger upward, or downward. And thus, in some cases, the will determines itself in a very sovereign manner, because it will, without a reason borrowed from the understanding; and hereby it discovers its own perfect power of choice, rising from within itself, and free from all influence or restraint of any kind." And in pages 66, 70, 73, and 74, this author very expressly supposes the will in many cases to be determined by no motive at all, but to act altogether without motive or ground of preference. Here I would observe,

I. The very supposition which is here made, directly contradicts and overthrows itself. For the thing supposed, wherein this grand argument consists, is, that among several things the will actually chooses one before another, at the same time that it is perfectly indifferent; which is the very same thing as to say, the mind has a preference, at the same time that it has no preference. What is meant cannot be, that the mind is indifferent before it comes to have a choice, or until it has a preference; or, which is the same thing, that the mind is indifferent until it comes to be not indifferent. For, certainly, this author did not suppose he had a controversy with any person in supposing this; and then it is nothing to his purpose, that the mind which chooses, was indifferent once, unless it chooses remaining indifferent; for otherwise, it does not choose at all in that case of indifference, concerning which is all the question. Besides, it appears in fact, that the thing which this author supposes, is not that the will chooses one thing before another, concerning which it is indifferent before it chooses, but also is

indifferent when it chooses; and that its being otherwise than indifferent is not until afterwards, in consequence of its choice; and that the chosen thing's appearing preferable to, and more agreeable than, another, arises from its choice already made. His words are (page 30)—"Where the objects which are proposed appear equally fit or good, the will is left without a guide or director, and, therefore, must make its own choice, by its own determination—it being properly a self-determining power. And in such cases the will does, as it were, make a good to itself by its own choice—*i.e.*, creates its pleasure or delight in this self-chosen good. Even as a man by seizing upon a spot of unoccupied land in an uninhabited country, makes it his own possession and property, and as such rejoices in it. Where things were indifferent before, the will finds nothing to make them more agreeable, considered merely in themselves, but the pleasure it feels *arising from its own choice*, and its perseverance therein. We love many things which we have chosen, *and purely because we chose them.*"

This is as much as to say, that we first begin to prefer many things, now ceasing any longer to be indifferent with respect to them, purely because we have preferred and choosen them before. These things must needs be spoken inconsiderately by this author. Choice or preference cannot be before itself in the same instance, either in the order of time or nature; it cannot be the foundation of itself, or the fruit or consequence of itself. The very act of choosing one thing rather then another, is preferring that thing, and that is setting a higher value on that thing. But that the mind sets a higher value on one thing than another is not, in the first place, the fruit of its setting a higher value on that thing.

This author says (page 36)—"The will may be perfectly indifferent, and yet the will may determine itself to choose one or the other." And again, in the same page—"I am entirely indifferent to either; and yet my will may determine itself to choose." And again—"Which I shall choose must be determined by the mere act of my will." If the choice is determined by a mere act of will, then the choice is determined by a mere act of choice. And concerning this matter, namely, that the act of the will itself is determined by an act of choice, this writer is express in page 72. Speaking of

the case, where there is no superior fitness in objects presented, he has these words—"There it must act by its own *choice*, and determine itself as it pleases." Where it is supposed that the very determination, which is the ground and spring of the will's act, is an act of choice and pleasure, wherein one act is more agreeable, and the mind better pleased in it, than another; and this preference, and superior pleasedness is the ground of all it does in the case. And if so, the mind is not indifferent when it determins itself, but had rather do one thing than another—had rather determine itself one way than another. And, therefore, the will does not act at all in indifference, not so much as in the first step it takes, or the first rise and beginning of its acting. If it be possible for the understanding to act in indifference, yet to be sure the will never does; because the will's beginning to act is the very same thing as its beginning to choose or prefer. And if in the very first act of the will, the mind prefers something, then the idea of that thing preferred does at that time preponderate, or prevail in the mind; or, which is the same thing, the idea of it has a prevailing influence on the will. So that this wholly destroys the thing supposed, namely, that the mind can by a sovereign power choose one of two or more things, which in the view of the mind are, in every respect, perfectly equal, one of which does not at all preponderate, nor has any prevailing influence on the mind above another.

So that this author, in his grand argument for the ability of the will to choose one of two or more things, concerning which it is perfectly indifferent, does at the same time, in effect, deny the thing he supposes, and allows and asserts the point he endeavours to overthrow; even that the will, in choosing, is subject to no prevailing influence of the idea, or view of the thing chosen. And, indeed, it is impossible to offer this argument without overthrowing it; the thing supposed in it being inconsistent with itself, and that which denies itself. To suppose the will to act at all in a state of perfect indifference, either to determine itself, or to do anything else, is to assert that the mind chooses without choosing. To say that when it is indifferent it can do as it pleases, is to say that it can follow its pleasure when it has no pleasure to follow. And, therefore, if there be any difficulty in the instance of two cakes, or two eggs, &c.,

which are exactly alike, one as good as another—concerning which this author supposes the mind in fact has a choice, and so, in effect, supposes that it has a preference—it as much concerned himself to solve the difficulty, as it does those whom he opposes. For if these instances prove anything to his purpose, they prove that a man chooses without choice. And yet this is not to his purpose; because if this is what he asserts, his own words are as much against him, and do as much contradict him as the words of those he disputes against can do.

II. There is no great difficulty in showing, in such instances as are alleged, not only that it must needs be so, that the mind must be influenced in its choice by something that has a preponderating influence upon it, but also how it is so. A little attention to our own experience, and a distinct consideration of the acts of our own minds in such cases, will be sufficient to clear up the matter.

Thus, supposing I have a chess-board before me, and because I am required by a superior, or desired by a friend, or to make some experiment concerning my own ability and liberty, or on some other consideration, I am determined to touch some one of the spots or squares on the board with my finger—not being limited or directed in the first proposal, or my own first purpose, which is general, to any one in particular, and there being nothing in the squares in themselves considered that recommends any one of all the sixty-four, more than another—in this case, my mind determines to give itself up to what is vulgarly called accident,* by determining to touch that square which happens to be most in view, which my eye is especially upon at that moment, or which happens to be then most in my mind, or which I shall be directed to by some other such like accident. Here are several steps of the mind's proceeding (though all may be done, as it were, in a moment) the first step is its general determination that it will touch one of the squares. The next step is another general determination to give itself up to accident, in some certain

* I have elsewhere observed what that is, which is vulgarly called accident; that it is nothing akin to the Arminian metaphysical notion of contingence, something not connected with anything foregoing; but that it is something that comes to pass in the course of things, in some affair that men are concerned in, unforseen, and not owing to their design.

way, as to touch that which shall be most in the eye or mind at that time, or to some other such like accident. The third and last step is a particular determination to touch a certain individual spot, even that square which, by that sort of accident the mind has pitched upon, has actually offered itself beyond others. Now, it is apparent that in none of these several steps does the mind proceed in absolute indifference, but in each of them is influenced by a preponderating inducement. So it is in the first step—the mind's general determination to touch one of the sixty-four spots; the mind is not absolutely indifferent whether it does so or no; it is induced to it for the sake of making some experiment, or by the desire of a friend, or some other motive that prevails. So it is in the second step—the mind's determining to give itself up to accident, by touching that which shall be most in the eye, or the idea of which shall be most prevalent in the mind, &c; the mind is not absolutely indifferent whether it proceeds by this rule or no, but chooses it, because it appears at that time a convenient and requisite expedient in order to fulfil the general purpose aforesaid. And so it is in the third and last step—its determining to touch that individual spot which actually does prevail in the mind's view; the mind is not indifferent concerning this, but is influenced by a prevailing inducement and reason; which is, that this is a prosecution of the preceding determination, which appeared requisite, and was fixed before in the second step.

Accident will ever serve a man, without hindering him a moment, in such a case. It will always be so among a number of objects in view; one will prevail in the eye, or in idea, beyond others. When we have our eyes open in the clear sun-shine, many objects strike the eye at once, and innumerable images may be at once painted in it by the rays of light; but the attention of the mind is not equal to several of them at once; or if it be, it does not continue so for any time. And so it is with respect to the ideas of the mind in general; several ideas are not in equal strength in the mind's view and notice at once, or, at least, do not remain so for any sensible continuance. There is nothing in the world more constantly varying then the ideas of the mind; they do not remain precisely in the same state for the least perceivable space of time; as is evident by this, that all perceivable time

is judged and perceived by the mind only by the succession or the successive changes of its own ideas. Therefore, while the views or perceptions of the mind remain precisely in the same state, there is no perceivable space or length of time, because no sensible succession at all.

As the acts of the will, in each step of the fore-mentioned procedure, do not come to pass without a particular cause, every act is owing to a prevailing inducement; so the accident, as I have called it, or that which happens in the unsearchable course of things, to which the mind yields itself, and by which it is guided, is not any thing that comes to pass without a cause; and the mind in determining to be guided by it, is not determined by something that has no cause, any more than if it determined to be guided by a lot, or the casting of a die. For though the die's falling in such a manner be accidental to him that casts it, yet none will suppose that there is no cause why it falls as it does. The involuntary changes in the succession of our ideas, though the cause may not be observed, have as much a cause as the changeable motions of the motes that float in the air, or the continual, infinitely various, successive changes of the unevenesses on the surface of the water.

There are two things especially, which are probably the occasions of confusion in the minds of them who insist upon it, that the will acts in a proper indifference, and without being moved by any inducement, in its determinations in such cases as have been mentioned :—

Firstly—They seem to mistake the point in question, or at least not to keep it distinctly in view. The question they dispute about is, whether the mind be indifferent about the objects presented, one of which is to be taken, touched, pointed to, &c.—as two eggs, two cakes, which appear equally good; whereas the question to be considered is, whether the person be indifferent with respect to his own actions; whether he does not, on some consideration or other, prefer one act with respect to these objects before another. The mind in its determination and choice, in these cases, is not most immediately and directly conversant about the objects presented, but the acts to be done concerning these objects. The objects may appear equal, and the mind may never properly make any choice between them. but the next act of the

will being about the external actions to be performed, taking, touching, &c., these may not appear equal, and one action may properly be chosen before another. In each step of the mind's progress, the determination is not about the objects, unless indirectly and improperly, but about the actions, which it chooses for other reasons than any preference of the objects, and for reasons not taken at all from the objects.

There is no necessity of supposing that the mind does ever at all properly choose one of the objects before another; either before it has taken or afterwards. Indeed, the man chooses to take or touch one rather than another, but not because he chooses the thing taken, or touched, but from foreign considerations. The case may be so that of two things offered a man may, for certain reasons, choose and prefer the taking of that which he undervalues, and choose to neglect to take that which his mind prefers. In such a case, choosing the thing taken, and choosing to take, are diverse; and so they are in a case where the things presented are equal in the mind's esteem, and neither of them preferred. All that fact and experience makes evident, is, that the mind chooses one action rather than another, and, therefore, the arguments which they bring, in order to be to their purpose, ought to be to prove that the mind chooses the action in perfect indifference, with respect to that action; and not to prove that the mind chooses the action in perfect indifference with respect to the object; which is very possible, and yet the will not act at all without prevalent inducement, and proper preponderation.

Secondly—Another reason of confusion and difficulty in this matter seems to be, not distinguishing between a general indifference, or an indifference with respect to what is to be done in a more distant and general view of it, and a particular indifference, or an indifference with respect to the next immediate act, viewed with its particular and present circumstances. A man may be perfectly indifferent with respect to his own actions in the former respect, and yet not in the latter. Thus, in the foregoing instance of touching one of the squares of a chess-board; when it is first proposed that I should touch one of them, I may be perfectly indifferent which I touch; because as yet I view the matter remotely and

generally, being but in the first step of the mind's progress in the affair. But yet, when I am actually come to the last step, and the very next thing to be determined is, which is to be touched, having already determined that I will touch that which happens to be most in my eye or mind, and my mind being now fixed on a particular one, the act of touching that, considered thus immediately, and in these particular present circumstances, is not what my mind is absolutely indifferent about.

SECTION VII.

Concerning the Notion of Liberty of Will consisting in Indifference.

What has been said in the foregoing section has a tendency, in some measure, to evince the absurdity of the opinion of such as place liberty in indifference, or in that equilibrium whereby the will is without all antecedent determination or bias, and left hitherto free from any prepossessing inclination to one side or the other; that so the determination of the will to either side may be entirely from itself, and that it may be owing only to its own power, and that sovereignty which it has over itself, that it goes this way rather then that.*

But inasmuch as this has been of such long standing, and has been so generally received, and so much

* Dr. Whitby, and some other Arminians, make a distinction of different kinds of freedom; one of God, and perfect Spirits above; another of persons in a state of trial. The former Dr. Whitby allows to consist with necessity; the latter he holds to be without necessity: and this latter he supposes to be requisite to our being the subjects of praise or dispraise, rewards or punishments, precepts and prohibitions, promises and threats, exhortations and dehortations, and a covenant treaty. And to this freedom he supposes indifference to be requisite. In his Discourse on the Five Points, pages 299, 300, he says:—"It is a freedom (speaking of a freedom not only from coaction, but from necessity) requisite, as we conceive, to render us capable of trial or probation, and to render our actions worthy of praise or dispraise, and our persons of rewards or punishments." And, in the next page, speaking of the same matter, he says—"Excellent to this purpose, are the words of Mr. Thorndike: we say not, that indifference is requisite to all freedom, but to the freedom of man alone in this state of travail and proficience; the ground of which is God's tender of a treaty, and conditions of peace and reconcilement to fallen man, together with those precepts and prohibitions, those promises and threats, those exhortations and dehortations it is enforced with.

insisted on by Pelagians, Semi-pelagians, Jesuits, Socinians, Arminians, and others, it may deserve a more full consideration. And, therefore, I shall now proceed to a more particular and thorough inquiry into this notion.

Now lest some should suppose that I do not understand those that place liberty in indifference, or should charge me with misrepresenting their opinion, I would signify that I am sensible, there are some, who when they talk of the liberty of the will as consisting in indifference, express themselves as though they would not be understood of the indifference of the inclination or tendency of the will, but of, I know not what indifference of the soul's power of willing; or that the will, with respect to its power or ability to choose, is indifferent, can go either way indifferently, either to the right hand or left, either act or forbear to act, one as well as the other; however, this seems to be a refining only of some particular writers, and newly invented, and which will by no means consist with the manner of expression used by the defenders of liberty of indifference in general. I wish such refiners would thoroughly consider, whether they distinctly know their own meaning, when they make a distinction between indifference of the soul as to its power or ability of willing or choosing, and the soul's indifference as to the preference or choice itself; and whether they do not deceive themselves in imagining that they have any distinct meaning at all. The indifference of the soul as to its ability or power to will, must be the same thing as the indifference of the state of the power or faculty of the will, or the indifference of the state which the soul itself, which has that power or faculty, hitherto remains in, as to the exercise of that power, in the choice it shall by and by make.

But not to insist any longer on the abstruseness and inexplicableness of this distinction; let what will be supposed concerning the meaning of them that make use of it, thus much must, at least, be intended by Arminians, when they talk of indifference as essential to liberty of will, if they intend anything, in any respect to their purpose, namely, that it is such an indifference as leaves the will not determined already, but free from actual possession, and vacant of predetermination, so far, that there may be room for the exercise of the

self-determining power of the will; and that the will's freedom consists in, or depends upon, this vacancy and opportunity that is left for the will itself to be the determiner of the act that is to be the free act.

And here I would observe, in the first place, that to make out this scheme of liberty, the indifference must be perfect and absolute—there must be a perfect freedom from all antecedent preponderation or inclination. Because if the will be already inclined before it exerts its own sovereign power on itself, then its inclination is not wholly owing to itself; if when two opposites are proposed to the soul for its choice, the proposal does not find the soul wholly in a state of indifference, then it is not found in a state of liberty for mere self-determination. The least degree of antecedent bias must be inconsistent with their notion of liberty; for so long as prior inclination possesses the will, and is not removed, it binds the will, so that it is utterly impossible that the will should act otherwise than agreeably to it. Surely the will cannot act or choose contrary to a remaining prevailing inclination of the will. To suppose otherwise, would be the same thing as to suppose that the will is inclined contrary to its present prevailing inclination, or contrary to what it is inclined to. That which the will chooses and prefers, that, all things considered, it preponderates and inclines to. It is equally impossible for the will to choose contrary to its own remaining and present preponderating inclination, as it is to prefer contrary to its own present preference, or choose contrary to its own present choice. The will, therefore, so long as it is under the influence of an old preponderating inclination, is not at liberty for a new free act, or any act that shall now be an act of self-determination. The act which is a self-determined free act, must be an act which the will determines in the possession and use of such a liberty, as consists in a freedom from every thing, which, if it were there, would make it impossible that the will, at that time, should be otherwise than that way to which it tends.

If any one should say, there is no need that the indifference should be perfect; but although a former inclination and preference still remains, yet, if it be not very strong and violent, possibly the strength of the will may oppose and overcome it.

This is grossly absurd; for the strength of the will, let it be ever so great, does not at all enable it to act one way, and not the contrary way, both at the same time. It gives it no such sovereignty and command, as to cause itself to prefer and not to prefer at the same time, or to choose contrary to its own present choice.

Therefore, if there be the least degree of antecedent preponderation of the will, it must be perfectly abolished before the will can be at liberty to determine itself the contrary way. And if the will determines itself the same way, it is not a free determination, because the will is not wholly at liberty in so doing; its determination is not altogether from itself, but it was partly determined before, in its prior inclination; and all the freedom the will exercises in the case, is an increase of inclination, which it gives itself, over and above what it had by the foregoing bias; so much is from itself, and so much is from perfect indifference. For though the will had a previous tendency that way, yet as to that additional degree of inclination, it had no tendency. Therefore the previous tendency is of no consideration, with respect to the act wherein the will is free. So that it comes to the same thing which was said at first, that as to the act of the will, wherein the will is free, there must be perfect indifference, or equilibrium.

To illustrate this; if we should suppose a sovereign self-moving power in a natural body, but that the body is in motion already, by an antecedent bias—for instance, gravitation towards the centre of the earth—and has one degree of motion already by virtue of that previous tendency, but by its self-moving power it adds one degree more to its motion, and moves so much more swiftly towards the centre of the earth than it would do by its gravity only, it is evident that all that is owing to a self-moving power in this case is the additional degree of motion, and that the other degree of motion which it had from gravity is of no consideration in the case—does not help the effect of the free self-moving power in the least; the effect is just the same as if the body had received from itself one degree of motion from a state of perfect rest. So if we should suppose a self-moving power given to the scale of a balance, which has a weight of one degree beyond the opposite scale, and we ascribe to it an ability to add to itself another degree

of force the same way, by its self-moving power, this is just the same thing as to ascribe to it a power to give itself one degree of preponderation from a perfect equilibrium; and so much power as the scale has to give itself an over-balance from a perfect equipoise, so much self-moving self-preponderating power it has, and no more. So that its free power this way is always to be measured from perfect equilibrium.

I need say no more to prove that if indifference be essential to liberty, it must be perfect indifference; and that so far as the will is destitute of this, so far it is destitute of that freedom by which it is its own master, and in a capacity of being its own determiner, without being at all passive, or subject to the power and sway of something else, in its motions and determinations.

Having observed these things, let us now try whether this notion of the liberty of will consisting in indifference and equilibrium, and the will's self-determination in such a state, be not absurd and inconsistent.

And here I would lay down this as an axiom of undoubted truth—that every free act is done in a state of freedom, and not only after such a state. If an act of the will be an act wherein the soul is free, it must be exerted in a state of freedom, and in the time of freedom. It will not suffice, that the act immediately follows a state of liberty, but liberty must yet continue, and co-exist with the act; the soul remaining in possession of liberty. Because that is the notion of a free act of the soul, even an act wherein the soul uses or exercises liberty. But if the soul is not, in the very time of the act, in the possession of liberty, it cannot at that time be in the use of it.

Now the question is, whether ever the soul of man puts forth any act of will while it yet remains in a state of liberty, in that notion of a state of liberty, namely, as implying a state of indifference; or whether the soul ever exerts an act of choice or preference, while at that very time the will is in a perfect equilibrium, not inclining one way more than another? The very putting of the question is sufficient to show the absurdity of the affirmative answer; for how ridiculous would it be for any body to insist that the soul chooses one thing before

another, when at the very same instant it is perfectly indifferent with respect to each! This is the same thing as to say, the soul prefers one thing to another, at the very same time that it has no preference. Choice and preference can no more be in a state of indifference, than motion can be in a state of rest, or than the preponderation of the scale of a balance can be in a state of equilibrium. Motion may be the next moment after rest, but cannot co-exist with it, in any, even the least, part of it. So choice may be immediately after a state of indifference, but has no co-existence with it. Even the very beginning of it is not in a state of indifference. And, therefore, if this be liberty, no act of the will, in any degree, is ever performed in a state of liberty, or in the time of liberty. Volition and liberty are so far from agreeing together, and being essential one to another, that they are contrary one to another, and one excludes and destroys the other, as much as motion and rest, light and darkness, or life and death. So that the will acts not at all—does not so much as begin to act in the time of such liberty; freedom is perfectly at an end, and has ceased to be, at the first moment of action, and, therefore, liberty cannot reach the action to effect or qualify it, or give it a denomination, or any part of it, any more than if it had ceased to be twenty years before the action began. The moment that liberty ceases to be, it ceases to be a qualification of any thing. If light and darkness succeed one another instantaneously, light qualifies nothing after it is gone out, to make any thing lightsome or bright, any more at the first moment of perfect darkness, than months or years after. Life denominates nothing vital at the first moment of perfect death. So freedom, if it consists in, or implies indifference, can denominate nothing free, at the first moment of preference or preponderation. Therefore it is manifest, that no liberty which the soul is possessed of, or ever uses, in any of its acts of volition consists in indifference; and that the opinion of such as suppose that indifference belongs to the very essence of liberty, is to the highest degree absurd and contradictory.

If any one should imagine that this manner of arguing is nothing but trick and delusion, and to evade the reasoning, should say, that the thing wherein the will exercises its liberty is not in the act of choice or preponderation itself, but in determining itself to a certain

choice or preference. That the act of the will wherein it is free, and uses its own sovereignty, consists in its causing or determining the change or transition, from a state of indifference to a certain preference, or determining to give a certain turn to the balance, which has hitherto been even; and that this act the will exerts in a state of liberty, or while the will yet remains in equilibrium, and perfect master of itself. I say, if any one chooses to express his notion of liberty after this, or some such manner, let us see if he can make out his matters any better than before.

What is asserted is, that the will, while it yet remains in perfect equilibrium, without preference, determines to change itself from that state, and excite in itself a certain choice or preference. Now, let us see whether this does not come to the same absurdity we had before. If it be so, that the will, while it yet remains perfectly indifferent, determines to put itself out of that state, and give itself a certain preponderation, then I would inquire, whether the soul does not determine this of choice, or whether the will's coming to a determination to do so, be not the same thing as the soul's coming to a choice to do so. If the soul does not determine this of choice, or in the exercise of choice, then it does not determine it voluntarily. And if the soul does not determine it voluntarily, or of its own will, then in what sense does its will determine it? And if the will does not determine it, then how is the liberty of the will exercised in the determination? What sort of liberty is exercised by the soul in those determinations, wherein there is no exercise of choice, which are not voluntary, and wherein the will is not concerned? But if it be allowed that this determination is an act of choice, and it be insisted on that the soul, while it yet remains in a state of perfect indifference, chooses to put itself out of that state, and to turn itself one way, then the soul is already come to a choice, and chooses that way. And so we have the very same absurdity which we had before. Here is the soul in a state of choice, and in a state of equilibrium, both at the same time, the soul already choosing one way, while it remains in a state of perfect indifference, and has no choice of one way more than the other. And, indeed, this manner of talking, though it may a little hide the absurdity, in the obscurity of expression, is more nonsensical, and in-

creases the inconsistence. To say, the free act of the will, or the act which the will exerts in a state of freedom and indifference, does not imply preference in it, but is what the will does in order to causing or producing a preference, is as much as to say, the soul chooses (for to will and to choose are the same thing) without choice, and prefers without preference, in order to cause or produce the beginning of a preference, or the first choice. And that is, that the first choice is exerted without choice, in order to produce itself.

If any, to evade these things, should own that a state of liberty and a state of indifference are not the same, and that the former may be without the latter, but should say that indifference is still essential to the freedom of an act of will, in some sort—namely, as it is necessary to go immediately before it, it being essential to the freedom of an act of will that it should directly and immediately arise out of a state of indifference; still this will not help the cause of Arminian liberty, or make it consistent with itself. For if the act springs immediately out of a state of indifference, then it doth not arise from antecedent choice or preference. But if the act arises directly out of a state of indifference, without any intervening choice to choose and determine it, then the act not being determined by choice, is not determined by the will; the mind exercises no free choice in the affair, and free choice and free will have no hand in the determination of the act. Which is entirely inconsistent with their notion of the freedom of volition.

If any should suppose that these difficulties and absurdities may be avoided, by saying that the liberty of the mind consists in a power to suspend the act of the will, and so to keep it in a state of indifference, until there has been opportunity for consideration; and so shall say, that however indifference is not essential to liberty in such a manner, that the mind must make its choice in a state of indifference, which is an inconsistency, or that the act of will must spring immediately out of indifference; yet indifference may be essential to the liberty of acts of the will in this respect—namely, that liberty consists in a power of the mind to forbear or suspend the act of volition, and keep the mind in a state of indifference for the present, until there has been opportunity for proper deliberation; I say, if any one

imagines that this helps the matter, it is a great mistake; it reconciles no inconsistency, and relieves no difficulty which the affair is attended with. For here the following things must be observed :—

Firstly—That this suspending of volition, if there be properly any such thing, is itself an act of volition. If the mind determines to suspend its act, it determines it voluntarily; it chooses, on some consideration, to suspend it And this choice or determination, is an act of the will, and, indeed, it is supposed to be so in the very hypothesis; for it is supposed, that the liberty of the will consists in its power to do this, and that its doing it is the very thing wherein the will exercises its liberty. But how can the will exercise liberty in it, if it be not an act of the will? The liberty of the will is not exercised in anything but what the will does.

Secondly—This determining to suspend acting is not only an act of the will, but it is supposed to be the only free act of the will; because it is said, that this is the thing wherein the liberty of the will consists. Now, if this be so, then this is all the act of will that we have to consider in this controversy, about the liberty of will, and in our inquiries, wherein the liberty of man consists. And now the fore-mentioned difficulties remain, the former question returns upon us—namely, wherein consists the freedom of the will in those acts wherein it is free? And if this act of determining a suspension be the only act in which the will is free, then wherein consists the will's freedom with respect to this act of suspension? And how is indifference essential to this act? The answer must be, according to what is supposed in the evasion under consideration, that the liberty of the will in this act of suspension consists in a power to suspend even this act, until there has been opportunity for thorough deliberation. But this will be to plunge directly into the grossest nonsense; for it is the act of suspension itself that we are speaking of, and there is no room for a space of deliberation and suspension, in order to determine whether we will suspend or no. For that supposes, that even suspension itself may be deferred, which is absurd; for the very deferring the determination of suspension, to consider whether we will suspend or no, will be actually suspending. For during the space of suspension, to consider whether to suspend, the

act is *ipso facto* suspended. There is no medium between suspending to act, and immediately acting; and, therefore, no possibility of avoiding either the one or the other one moment; and so no room for prior deliberation.

And besides, this is attended with ridiculous absurdity another way; for now it is come to that, that liberty consists wholly in the mind's having power to suspend its determination whether to suspend or no, that there may be time for consideration, whether it be best to suspend. And if liberty consists in this only, then this is the liberty under consideration; we have to inquire now, how liberty with respect to this act of suspending a determination of suspension consists in indifference, or how indifference is essential to it? The answer, according to the hypothesis we are upon, must be, that it consists in a power of suspending even this last-mentioned act, to have time to consider whether to suspend that. And then the same difficulties and inquiries return over again with respect to that; and so on for ever. Which, if it would show any thing, would show only that there is no such thing as a free act. It drives the exercise of freedom back *in infinitum*; and that is to drive it out of the world.

And besides all this, there is a delusion and a latent gross contradiction in the affair another way; inasmuch as in explaining how, or in what respect, the will is free with regard to a particular act of volition, it is said, that its liberty consists in a power to determine to suspend that act, which places liberty not in that act of volition which the inquiry is about, but altogether in another antecedent act; which contradicts the thing supposed in both the question and answer. The question is, wherein consists the mind's liberty in any particular act of volition? And the answer, in pretending to show wherein lies the mind's liberty in that act, in effect says, it does not lie in that act at all, but in another, namely, a volition to suspend that act. And, therefore, the answer is both contradictory, and altogether impertinent and beside the purpose. For it does not show wherein the liberty of the will consists in the act in question; instead of that, it supposes it does not consist in that act at all, but in another distinct from it, even a volition to suspend that act, and take time to consider of it. And no account is pretended to be given wherein the mind

is free with respect to that act, wherein this answer supposes the liberty of the mind, indeed, consists, namely, the act of suspension, or of determining the suspension.

On the whole, it is exceeding manifest that the liberty of the mind does not consist in indifference, and that indifference is not essential or necessary to it, or at all belonging to it, as the Arminians suppose; that opinion being full of nothing but absurdity and self-contradiction.

SECTION VIII.

Concerning the Supposed Liberty of the Will, as Opposite to all Necessity.

It is a thing chiefly insisted on by Arminians, in this controversy, as a thing most important and essential in human liberty, that volitions, or the acts of the will, are contingent events; understanding contingence as opposite, not only to constraint, but to all necessity. Therefore I would particularly consider this matter.

And, firstly, I would inquire, whether there is, or can be, any such thing, as a volition which is contingent in such a sense, as not only to come to pass without any necessity of constraint or co-action, but also without a necessity of consequence, or an infallible connection with anything foregoing.

Secondly—Whether, if it were so, this would at all help the cause of liberty.

I would consider whether volition is a thing that ever does, or can come to pass, in this manner contingently. And here it must be remembered, that it has been already shown, that nothing can ever come to pass without a cause, or reason why it exists in this manner rather than another; and the evidence of this has been particularly applied to the acts of the will. Now, if this be so, it will demonstrably follow, that the

acts of the will are never contingent, or without necessity, in the sense spoken of; inasmuch as those things which have a cause, or reason of their existence, must be connected with their cause. This appears by the following considerations:—

Firstly—For an event to have a cause and ground of its existence, and yet not be connected with its cause, is an inconsistence. For if the event be not connected with the cause, it is not dependent on the cause; its existence is, as it were, loose from its influence, and may attend it or may not, it being a mere contingence whether it follows or attends the influence of the cause, or not; and that is the same thing as not to be dependent on it. And to say the event is not dependent on its cause, is absurd; it is the same thing as to say it is not its cause, nor the event the effect of it; for dependence on the influence of a cause is the very notion of an effect. If there be no such relation between one thing and another, consisting in the connection and dependence of one thing on the influence of another, then it is certain there is no such relation between them as is signified by the terms cause and effect. So far as an event is dependent on a cause, and connected with it, so much causality is there in the case, and no more. The cause does, or brings to pass no more in any event, than is dependent on it. If we say, the connection and dependence is not total, but partial, and that the effect, though it has some connection and dependence, yet is not entirely dependent on it; that is the same thing as to say, that not all that is in the event is an effect of that cause, but that only part of it arises from thence, and part some other way.

Secondly—If there are some events which are not necessarily connected with their causes, then it will follow, that there are some things which come to pass without any cause, contrary to the supposition. For if there be any event which was not necessarily connected with the influence of the cause under such circumstances, then it was contingent whether it would attend or follow the influence of the cause, or no; it might have followed, and it might not, when the cause was the same, its influence the same, and under the same circumstances. And if so, why did it follow, rather than not follow? There is no cause or reason of this. Therefore, here is something without any cause or reason why it is, namely,

the following of the effect on the influence of the cause, with which it was not necessarily connected. If there be not a necessary connection of the effect on any thing antecedent, then we may suppose that sometimes the event will follow the cause, and sometimes not, when the cause is the same, and in every respect in the same state and circumstances. And what can be the cause and reason of this strange phenomenon, even this diversity, that in one instance, the effect should follow, in another not? It is evident by the supposition, that this is wholly without any cause or ground. Here is something in the present manner of the existence of things and state of the world, that is absolutely without a cause. Which is contrary to the supposition, and contrary to what has been before demonstrated.

Thirdly—To suppose there are some events which have a cause and ground of their existence, that yet are not necessarily connected with their cause, is to suppose that they have a cause which is not their cause. Thus, if the effect be not necessarily connected with the cause, with its influence and influential circumstances, then, as I observed before, it is a thing possible and supposable that the cause may sometimes exert the same influence, under the same circumstances, and yet the effect not follow. And if this actually happens in any instance, this instance is a proof, in fact, that the influence of the cause is not sufficient to produce the effect. For if it had been sufficient, it would have done it. And yet, by the supposition, in another instance, the same cause, with perfectly the same influence, and when all circumstances which have any influence were the same, was followed with the effect. By which it is manifest that the effect in this last instance was not owing to the influence of the cause, but must come to pass some other way. For it was proved before, that the influence of the cause was not sufficient to produce the effect. And if it was not sufficient to produce it, then the production of it could not be owing to that influence, but must be owing to something else, or owing to nothing. And if the effect be not owing to the influence of the cause, then it is not the cause. Which brings us to the contradiction, of a cause, and no cause, that which is the ground and reason of the existence of a thing, and at the same time is not the ground and reason of its existence, nor is sufficient to be so.

If the matter be not already so plain as to render any further reasoning upon it impertinent, I would say, that that which seems to be the cause in the supposed case, can be no cause; its power and influence having, on a full trial, proved insufficient to produce such an effect; and if it be not sufficient to produce it, then it does not produce it. To say otherwise is to say there is power to do that which there is not power to do. If there be in a cause sufficient power exerted, and in circumstances sufficient to produce an effect, and so the effect be actually produced at one time, these things all concurring, will produce the effect at all times. And so we may turn it the other way; that which proves not sufficient at one time, cannot be sufficient at another, with precisely the same influential circumstances. And, therefore, if the effect follows, it is not owing to that cause, unless the different time be a circumstance which has influence; but that is contrary to the supposition, for it is supposed that all circumstances that have influence are the same. And, besides, this would be to suppose the time to be the cause, which is contrary to the supposition of the other thing's being the cause. But if merely diversity of time has no influence, then it is evident that it is as much of an absurdity to say the cause was sufficient to produce the effect at one time, and not at another, as to say that it is sufficient to produce the effect at a certain time, and yet not sufficient to produce the same effect at that same time.

On the whole, it is clearly manifest, that every effect has a necessary connection with its cause, or with that which is the true ground and reason of its existence. And, therefore, if there be no event without a cause, as was proved before, then no event whatsoever is contingent in the manner that Arminians suppose the free acts of the will to be contingent.

SECTION IX.

Of the Connection of the Acts of the Will with the Dictates of the Understanding.

It is manifest that the acts of the will are none of them contingent in such a sense as to be without all necessity, or so as not to be necessary with a necessity of consequence and connection, because every act of the will is some way connected with the understanding, and is as the greatest apparent good is, in the manner which has already been explained—namely, that the soul always wills or chooses that which, in the present view of the mind, considered in the whole of that view, and all that belongs to it, appears most agreeable. Because, as was observed before, nothing is more evident than that when men act voluntarily, and do what they please, then they do what appears most agreeable to them; and to say otherwise, would be as much as to affirm, that men do not choose what appears to suit them best, or what seems most pleasing to them; or that they do not choose what they prefer. Which brings the matter to a contradiction.

As it is very evident in itself that the acts of the will have some connection with the dictates or views of the understanding, so this is allowed by some of the chief of the Arminian writers, particularly by Dr. Whitby and Dr. Samuel Clark. Dr. Turnbull, though a great enemy to the doctrine of necessity, allows the same thing. In his Christian Philosophy (page 196) he with much approbation cites another philosopher, as of the same mind, in these words—"No man (says an excellent philosopher) sets himself about any thing but upon some view or other, which serves him for a reason for what he does; and whatsoever faculties he employs, the understanding, with such light as it has, well or ill informed, constantly leads; and by that light, true or false, all her operative powers are directed. The will itself, how absolute and incontrollable soever it may be thought, never fails in its obedience to the dictates of the understanding. Temples have their sacred images, and we see what influence they have always had over a great part of mankind; but in truth, the ideas and images in men's minds are the invisible powers that constantly govern them, and to these they all pay universally a ready submission.

But whether this be in a just consistence with themselves, and their own notions of liberty, I desire may now be impartially considered.

Dr. Whitby plainly supposes that the acts and determinations of the will always follow the understanding's apprehension or view of the greatest good to be obtained, or evil to be avoided; or, in other words, that the determinations of the will constantly and infallibly follow these two things in the understanding:—Firstly, the degree of good to be obtained, and evil to be avoided, proposed to the understanding, and apprehended, viewed, and taken notice of by it. Secondly, the degree of the understanding's view, notice or apprehension of that good or evil, which is increased by attention and consideration. That this is an opinion he is exceedingly peremptory in, (as he is in every opinion which he maintains in his controversy with the Calvinists,) with disdain of the contrary opinion, as absurd and self-contradictory, will appear by the following words of his, in his Discourse on the Five Points.* "Now, it is certain, that what naturally makes the understanding to perceive, is evidence proposed and apprehended, considered or adverted to; for nothing else can be requisite to make us come to the knowledge of the truth. Again, what makes the will choose, is something approved by the understanding; and, consequently, appearing to the soul as good. And whatsoever it refuses, is something represented by the understanding, and so appearing to the will as evil. Whence, all that God requires of us is and can be only this—to refuse the evil, and choose the good. Wherefore, to say that evidence proposed, apprehended, and considered, is not sufficient to make the understanding approve, or that the greatest good proposed, the greatest evil threatened, when equally believed and reflected on, is not sufficient to engage the will to choose the good and refuse the evil, is in effect to say, that which alone doth move the will to choose or to refuse is not sufficient to engage it so to do; which, being contradictory to itself, must of necessity be false. Be it then so, that we naturally have an aversation to the truths proposed to us in the Gospel, that only can make us indisposed to attend to them, but cannot hinder our

* Edit. 2nd, p. 211, 212, 213.

conviction, when we do apprehend them and attend to them. Be it that there is in us also a renitency to the good we are to choose; that only can indispose us to believe it is, and to approve it as our chiefest good. Be it that we are prone to the evil that we should decline; that only can render it the more difficult for us to believe it is the worst of evils. But yet, what we do really believe to be our chiefest good will still be chosen; and what we apprehend to be the worst of evils will, whilst we do continue under that conviction, be refused by us. It, therefore, can be only requisite, in order to these ends, that the Good Spirit should so illuminate our understandings, that we, attending to and considering what lies before us, should apprehend and be convinced of our duty; and that the blessings of the Gospel should be so propounded to us as that we may discern them to be our chiefest good; and the miseries it threateneth, so as we may be convinced that they are the worst of evils, that we may choose the one, and refuse the other.

Here let it be observed how plainly and peremptorily it is asserted, that the greatest good proposed, and the greatest evil threatened, when equally believed and reflected on, is sufficient to engage the will to choose the good and refuse the evil, and is that alone which doth move the will to choose or to refuse; and that it is contradictory to itself to suppose otherwise, and, therefore, must of necessity be false, and then what we do really believe to be our chiefest good will still be chosen, and what we apprehend to be the worst of evils will, whilst we continue under that conviction, be refused by us. Nothing could have been said more to the purpose fully to signify and declare that the determinations of the will must evermore follow the illumination, conviction, and notice of the understanding, with regard to the greatest good and evil proposed, reckoning both the degree of good and evil understood, and the degree of understanding, notice, and conviction of that proposed good and evil; and that it is thus necessarily, and can be otherwise in no instance, because it is asserted, that it implies a contradiction to suppose it ever to be otherwise.

I am sensible the doctor's aim in these assertions is against the Calvinists; to show, in opposition to them,

that there is no need of any physical operation of the Spirit of God on the will, to change and determine that to a good choice, but that God's operation and assistance is only moral, suggesting ideas to the understanding, which he supposes to be enough, if those ideas are attended to, infallibly to obtain the end. But whatever his design was, nothing can more directly and fully prove, that every determination of the will, in choosing and refusing, is necessary, directly contrary to his own notion of the liberty of the will. For if the determination of the will, evermore, in this manner, follows the light, conviction, and view of the understanding, concerning the greatest good and evil, and this be that alone which moves the will, and it be a contradiction to suppose otherwise, then it is necessarily so, the will necessarily follows this light or view of the understanding, not only in some of its acts, but in every act of choosing and refusing. So that the will does not determine itself in any one of its own acts, but all its acts, every act of choice and refusal, depends on, and is necessarily connected with, some antecedent cause, which cause is not the will itself, nor any act of its own, nor any thing pertaining to that faculty, but something belonging to another faculty, whose acts go before the will in all its acts, and govern and determine them every one.

Here, if it should be replied, that although it be true that, according to the doctor, the final determination of the will always depends upon, and is infallibly connected with, the understanding's conviction and notice of the greatest good, yet the acts of the will are not necessary, because that conviction and notice of the understanding is first dependent on a preceding act of the will, in determining to attend to, and take notice of, the evidence exhibited; by which means the mind obtains that degree of conviction which is sufficient and effectual to determine the consequent and ultimate choice of the will, and that the will with regard to that preceding act, whereby it determines whether to attend or no, is not necessary; and that in this, the liberty of the will consists, that when God holds forth sufficient objective light, the will is at liberty whether to command the attention of the mind to it.

Nothing can be more weak and inconsiderate than

imagines that this helps the matter, it is a great mistake; it reconciles no inconsistency, and relieves no difficulty which the affair is attended with. For here the following things must be observed :—

Firstly—That this suspending of volition, if there be properly any such thing, is itself an act of volition. If the mind determines to suspend its act, it determines it voluntarily; it chooses, on some consideration, to suspend it And this choice or determination, is an act of the will, and, indeed, it is supposed to be so in the very hypothesis; for it is supposed, that the liberty of the will consists in its power to do this, and that its doing it is the very thing wherein the will exercises its liberty. But how can the will exercise liberty in it, if it be not an act of the will? The liberty of the will is not exercised in anything but what the will does.

Secondly—This determining to suspend acting is not only an act of the will, but it is supposed to be the only free act of the will; because it is said, that this is the thing wherein the liberty of the will consists. Now, if this be so, then this is all the act of will that we have to consider in this controversy, about the liberty of will, and in our inquiries, wherein the liberty of man consists. And now the fore-mentioned difficulties remain, the former question returns upon us—namely, wherein consists the freedom of the will in those acts wherein it is free? And if this act of determining a suspension be the only act in which the will is free, then wherein consists the will's freedom with respect to this act of suspension? And how is indifference essential to this act? The answer must be, according to what is supposed in the evasion under consideration, that the liberty of the will in this act of suspension consists in a power to suspend even this act, until there has been opportunity for thorough deliberation. But this will be to plunge directly into the grossest nonsense; for it is the act of suspension itself that we are speaking of, and there is no room for a space of deliberation and suspension, in order to determine whether we will suspend or no. For that supposes, that even suspension itself may be deferred, which is absurd; for the very deferring the determination of suspension, to consider whether we will suspend or no, will be actually suspending. For during the *space of suspension*, to consider whether to suspend, the

act is *ipso facto* suspended. There is no medium between suspending to act, and immediately acting; and, therefore, no possibility of avoiding either the one or the other one moment; and so no room for prior deliberation.

And besides, this is attended with ridiculous absurdity another way; for now it is come to that, that liberty consists wholly in the mind's having power to suspend its determination whether to suspend or no, that there may be time for consideration, whether it be best to suspend. And if liberty consists in this only, then this is the liberty under consideration; we have to inquire now, how liberty with respect to this act of suspending a determination of suspension consists in indifference, or how indifference is essential to it? The answer, according to the hypothesis we are upon, must be, that it consists in a power of suspending even this last-mentioned act, to have time to consider whether to suspend that. And then the same difficulties and inquiries return over again with respect to that; and so on for ever. Which, if it would show any thing, would show only that there is no such thing as a free act. It drives the exercise of freedom back *in infinitum*; and that is to drive it out of the world.

And besides all this, there is a delusion and a latent gross contradiction in the affair another way; inasmuch as in explaining how, or in what respect, the will is free with regard to a particular act of volition, it is said, that its liberty consists in a power to determine to suspend that act, which places liberty not in that act of volition which the inquiry is about, but altogether in another antecedent act; which contradicts the thing supposed in both the question and answer. The question is, wherein consists the mind's liberty in any particular act of volition? And the answer, in pretending to show wherein lies the mind's liberty in that act, in effect says, it does not lie in that act at all, but in another, namely, a volition to suspend that act. And, therefore, the answer is both contradictory, and altogether impertinent and beside the purpose. For it does not show wherein the liberty of the will consists in the act in question; instead of that, it supposes it does not consist in that act at all, but in another distinct from it, even a volition to suspend that act, and take time to consider of it. And *no account is* pretended to be given wherein the mind

is free with respect to that act, wherein this answer supposes the liberty of the mind, indeed, consists, namely, the act of suspension, or of determining the suspension.

On the whole, it is exceeding manifest that the liberty of the mind does not consist in indifference, and that indifference is not essential or necessary to it, or at all belonging to it, as the Arminians suppose; that opinion being full of nothing but absurdity and self-contradiction.

SECTION VIII.

Concerning the Supposed Liberty of the Will, as Opposite to all Necessity.

It is a thing chiefly insisted on by Arminians, in this controversy, as a thing most important and essential in human liberty, that volitions, or the acts of the will, are contingent events; understanding contingence as opposite, not only to constraint, but to all necessity. Therefore I would particularly consider this matter.

And, firstly, I would inquire, whether there is, or can be, any such thing, as a volition which is contingent in such a sense, as not only to come to pass without any necessity of constraint or co-action, but also without a necessity of consequence, or an infallible connection with anything foregoing.

Secondly—Whether, if it were so, this would at all help the cause of liberty.

I would consider whether volition is a thing that ever does, or can come to pass, in this manner contingently. And here it must be remembered, that it has been already shown, that nothing can ever come to pass without a cause, or reason why it exists in this manner rather than another; and the evidence of this has been particularly applied to the acts of the will. *Now, if this be so,* it will demonstrably follow, that the

acts of the will are never contingent, or without necessity, in the sense spoken of; inasmuch as those things which have a cause, or reason of their existence, must be connected with their cause. This appears by the following considerations:—

Firstly—For an event to have a cause and ground of its existence, and yet not be connected with its cause, is an inconsistence. For if the event be not connected with the cause, it is not dependent on the cause; its existence is, as it were, loose from its influence, and may attend it or may not, it being a mere contingence whether it follows or attends the influence of the cause, or not; and that is the same thing as not to be dependent on it. And to say the event is not dependent on its cause, is absurd; it is the same thing as to say it is not its cause, nor the event the effect of it; for dependence on the influence of a cause is the very notion of an effect. If there be no such relation between one thing and another, consisting in the connection and dependence of one thing on the influence of another, then it is certain there is no such relation between them as is signified by the terms cause and effect. So far as an event is dependent on a cause, and connected with it, so much causality is there in the case, and no more. The cause does, or brings to pass no more in any event, than is dependent on it. If we say, the connection and dependence is not total, but partial, and that the effect, though it has some connection and dependence, yet is not entirely dependent on it; that is the same thing as to say, that not all that is in the event is an effect of that cause, but that only part of it arises from thence, and part some other way.

Secondly—If there are some events which are not necessarily connected with their causes, then it will follow, that there are some things which come to pass without any cause, contrary to the supposition. For if there be any event which was not necessarily connected with the influence of the cause under such circumstances, then it was contingent whether it would attend or follow the influence of the cause, or no; it might have followed, and it might not, when the cause was the same, its influence the same, and under the same circumstances. And if so, why did it follow, rather than not follow? There is no cause or reason of this. Therefore, here is something without any cause or reason why it is, namely,

the following of the effect on the influence of the cause, with which it was not necessarily connected. If there be not a necessary connection of the effect on any thing antecedent, then we may suppose that sometimes the event will follow the cause, and sometimes not, when the cause is the same, and in every respect in the same state and circumstances. And what can be the cause and reason of this strange phenomenon, even this diversity, that in one instance, the effect should follow, in another not? It is evident by the supposition, that this is wholly without any cause or ground. Here is something in the present manner of the existence of things and state of the world, that is absolutely without a cause. Which is contrary to the supposition, and contrary to what has been before demonstrated.

Thirdly—To suppose there are some events which have a cause and ground of their existence, that yet are not necessarily connected with their cause, is to suppose that they have a cause which is not their cause. Thus, if the effect be not necessarily connected with the cause, with its influence and influential circumstances, then, as I observed before, it is a thing possible and supposable that the cause may sometimes exert the same influence, under the same circumstances, and yet the effect not follow. And if this actually happens in any instance, this instance is a proof, in fact, that the influence of the cause is not sufficient to produce the effect. For if it had been sufficient, it would have done it. And yet, by the supposition, in another instance, the same cause, with perfectly the same influence, and when all circumstances which have any influence were the same, was followed with the effect. By which it is manifest that the effect in this last instance was not owing to the influence of the cause, but must come to pass some other way. For it was proved before, that the influence of the cause was not sufficient to produce the effect. And if it was not sufficient to produce it, then the production of it could not be owing to that influence, but must be owing to something else, or owing to nothing. And if the effect be not owing to the influence of the cause, then it is not the cause. Which brings us to the contradiction, of a cause, and no cause, that which is the ground and reason of the existence of a thing, and at the same time is not the ground and reason of its existence, nor is sufficient to be so.

If the matter be not already so plain as to render any further reasoning upon it impertinent, I would say, that that which seems to be the cause in the supposed case, can be no cause; its power and influence having, on a full trial, proved insufficient to produce such an effect; and if it be not sufficient to produce it, then it does not produce it. To say otherwise is to say there is power to do that which there is not power to do. If there be in a cause sufficient power exerted, and in circumstances sufficient to produce an effect, and so the effect be actually produced at one time, these things all concurring, will produce the effect at all times. And so we may turn it the other way; that which proves not sufficient at one time, cannot be sufficient at another, with precisely the same influential circumstances. And, therefore, if the effect follows, it is not owing to that cause, unless the different time be a circumstance which has influence; but that is contrary to the supposition, for it is supposed that all circumstances that have influence are the same. And, besides, this would be to suppose the time to be the cause, which is contrary to the supposition of the other thing's being the cause. But if merely diversity of time has no influence, then it is evident that it is as much of an absurdity to say the cause was sufficient to produce the effect at one time, and not at another, as to say that it is sufficient to produce the effect at a certain time, and yet not sufficient to produce the same effect at that same time.

On the whole, it is clearly manifest, that every effect has a necessary connection with its cause, or with that which is the true ground and reason of its existence. And, therefore, if there be no event without a cause, as was proved before, then no event whatsoever is contingent in the manner that Arminians suppose the free acts of the will to be contingent.

SECTION IX.

Of the Connection of the Acts of the Will with the Dictates of the Understanding.

It is manifest that the acts of the will are none of them contingent in such a sense as to be without all necessity, or so as not to be necessary with a necessity of consequence and connection, because every act of the will is some way connected with the understanding, and is as the greatest apparent good is, in the manner which has already been explained—namely, that the soul always wills or chooses that which, in the present view of the mind, considered in the whole of that view, and all that belongs to it, appears most agreeable. Because, as was observed before, nothing is more evident than that when men act voluntarily, and do what they please, then they do what appears most agreeable to them; and to say otherwise, would be as much as to affirm, that men do not choose what appears to suit them best, or what seems most pleasing to them; or that they do not choose what they prefer. Which brings the matter to a contradiction.

As it is very evident in itself that the acts of the will have some connection with the dictates or views of the understanding, so this is allowed by some of the chief of the Arminian writers, particularly by Dr. Whitby and Dr. Samuel Clark. Dr. Turnbull, though a great enemy to the doctrine of necessity, allows the same thing. In his Christian Philosophy (page 196) he with much approbation cites another philosopher, as of the same mind, in these words—"No man (says an excellent philosopher) sets himself about any thing but upon some view or other, which serves him for a reason for what he does; and whatsoever faculties he employs, the understanding, with such light as it has, well or ill informed, constantly leads; and by that light, true or false, all her operative powers are directed. The will itself, how absolute and incontrollable soever it may be thought, never fails in its obedience to the dictates of the understanding. Temples have their sacred images, and we see what influence they have always had over a great part of mankind; but in truth, the ideas and images in men's minds are the invisible powers that constantly govern them, and to these they all pay universally a ready submission.

But whether this be in a just consistence with themselves, and their own notions of liberty, I desire may now be impartially considered.

Dr. Whitby plainly supposes that the acts and determinations of the will always follow the understanding's apprehension or view of the greatest good to be obtained, or evil to be avoided; or, in other words, that the determinations of the will constantly and infallibly follow these two things in the understanding:—Firstly, the degree of good to be obtained, and evil to be avoided, proposed to the understanding, and apprehended, viewed, and taken notice of by it. Secondly, the degree of the understanding's view, notice or apprehension of that good or evil, which is increased by attention and consideration. That this is an opinion he is exceedingly peremptory in, (as he is in every opinion which he maintains in his controversy with the Calvinists,) with disdain of the contrary opinion, as absurd and self-contradictory, will appear by the following words of his, in his Discourse on the Five Points.* "Now, it is certain, that what naturally makes the understanding to perceive, is evidence proposed and apprehended, considered or adverted to; for nothing else can be requisite to make us come to the knowledge of the truth. Again, what makes the will choose, is something approved by the understanding; and, consequently, appearing to the soul as good. And whatsoever it refuses, is something represented by the understanding, and so appearing to the will as evil. Whence, all that God requires of us is and can be only this—to refuse the evil, and choose the good. Wherefore, to say that evidence proposed, apprehended, and considered, is not sufficient to make the understanding approve, or that the greatest good proposed, the greatest evil threatened, when equally believed and reflected on, is not sufficient to engage the will to choose the good and refuse the evil, is in effect to say, that which alone doth move the will to choose or to refuse is not sufficient to engage it so to do; which, being contradictory to itself, must of necessity be false. Be it then so, that we naturally have an aversation to the truths proposed to us in the Gospel, that only can make us indisposed to attend to them, but cannot hinder our

* Edit. 2nd, p. 211, 212, 213.

conviction, when we do apprehend them and attend to them. Be it that there is in us also a renitency to the good we are to choose; that only can indispose us to believe it is, and to approve it as our chiefest good. Be it that we are prone to the evil that we should decline; that only can render it the more difficult for us to believe it is the worst of evils. But yet, what we do really believe to be our chiefest good will still be chosen; and what we apprehend to be the worst of evils will, whilst we do continue under that conviction, be refused by us. It, therefore, can be only requisite, in order to these ends, that the Good Spirit should so illuminate our understandings, that we, attending to and considering what lies before us, should apprehend and be convinced of our duty; and that the blessings of the Gospel should be so propounded to us as that we may discern them to be our chiefest good; and the miseries it threateneth, so as we may be convinced that they are the worst of evils, that we may choose the one, and refuse the other.

Here let it be observed how plainly and peremptorily it is asserted, that the greatest good proposed, and the greatest evil threatened, when equally believed and reflected on, is sufficient to engage the will to choose the good and refuse the evil, and is that alone which doth move the will to choose or to refuse; and that it is contradictory to itself to suppose otherwise, and, therefore, must of necessity be false, and then what we do really believe to be our chiefest good will still be chosen, and what we apprehend to be the worst of evils will, whilst we continue under that conviction, be refused by us. Nothing could have been said more to the purpose fully to signify and declare that the determinations of the will must evermore follow the illumination, conviction, and notice of the understanding, with regard to the greatest good and evil proposed, reckoning both the degree of good and evil understood, and the degree of understanding, notice, and conviction of that proposed good and evil; and that it is thus necessarily, and can be otherwise in no instance, because it is asserted, that it implies a contradiction to suppose it ever to be otherwise.

I am sensible the doctor's aim in these assertions is *against the Calvinists*; to show, in opposition to them,

that there is no need of any physical operation of the Spirit of God on the will, to change and determine that to a good choice, but that God's operation and assistance is only moral, suggesting ideas to the understanding, which he supposes to be enough, if those ideas are attended to, infallibly to obtain the end. But whatever his design was, nothing can more directly and fully prove, that every determination of the will, in choosing and refusing, is necessary, directly contrary to his own notion of the liberty of the will. For if the determination of the will, evermore, in this manner, follows the light, conviction, and view of the understanding, concerning the greatest good and evil, and this be that alone which moves the will, and it be a contradiction to suppose otherwise, then it is necessarily so, the will necessarily follows this light or view of the understanding, not only in some of its acts, but in every act of choosing and refusing. So that the will does not determine itself in any one of its own acts, but all its acts, every act of choice and refusal, depends on, and is necessarily connected with, some antecedent cause, which cause is not the will itself, nor any act of its own, nor any thing pertaining to that faculty, but something belonging to another faculty, whose acts go before the will in all its acts, and govern and determine them every one.

Here, if it should be replied, that although it be true that, according to the doctor, the final determination of the will always depends upon, and is infallibly connected with, the understanding's conviction and notice of the greatest good, yet the acts of the will are not necessary, because that conviction and notice of the understanding is first dependent on a preceding act of the will, in determining to attend to, and take notice of, the evidence exhibited; by which means the mind obtains that degree of conviction which is sufficient and effectual to determine the consequent and ultimate choice of the will, and that the will with regard to that preceding act, whereby it determines whether to attend or no, is not necessary; and that in this, the liberty of the will consists, that when God holds forth sufficient objective light, the will is at liberty whether to command the attention of the mind to it.

Nothing can be more weak and inconsiderate than

such a reply as this. For that preceding act of the will, in determining to attend and consider, still is an act of the will, (it is so to be sure, if the liberty of the will consists in it, as is supposed,) and if it be an act of the will, it is an act of choice or refusal. And, therefore, if what the doctor asserts be true, it is determined by some antecedent light in the understanding concerning the greatest apparent good or evil. For he asserts, it is that light which alone doth move the will to choose or refuse. And, therefore, the will must be moved by that in choosing to attend to the objective light offered, in order to another consequent act of choice, so that this act is no less necessary than the other. And if we suppose another act of the will, still preceding both these mentioned, to determine both, still that also must be an act of the will, and an act of choice, and so must, by the same principles, be infallibly determined by some certain degree of light in the understanding concerning the greatest good. And let us suppose as many acts of the will, one preceding another, as we please, yet they are every one of them necessarily determined by a certain degree of light in the understanding, concerning the greatest and most eligible good in that case, and so not one of them free, according to Dr. Whitby's notion of freedom. And if it be said, the reason why men do not attend to light held forth is because of ill habits contracted by evil acts committed before, whereby their minds are indisposed to attend to and consider the truth held forth to them by God, the difficulty is not at all avoided; still the question returns, what determined the will in those preceding evil acts? It must, by Dr. Whitby's principles, still be the view of the understanding concerning the greatest good and evil. If this view of the understanding be that alone which doth move the will to choose or refuse, as the doctor asserts, then every act of choice or refusal, from a man's first existence, is moved and determined by this view, and this view of the understanding exciting and governing the act must be before the act; and, therefore, the will is necessarily determined, in every one of its acts, from a man's first existence, by a cause beside the will, and a cause that does not proceed from, or depend on, any act of the will at all; which at once utterly abolishes the doctor's whole scheme of liberty of will; and he, at one stroke, has cut the sinews of all his arguments from

the goodness, righteousness, faithfulness and sincerity of God, in his commands, promises, threatenings, calls, invitations, expostulations, which he makes use of under the heads of reprobation, election, universal redemption, sufficient and effectual grace, and the freedom of the will of man; and has enervated and made vain all those exclamations against the doctrine of the Calvinists, as charging God with manifest unrighteousness, unfaithfulness, hypocrisy, fallaciousness, and cruelty, which he hath over, and over, and over again, numberless times in his book.

Dr. Samuel Clark, in his demonstration of the being and attributes of God,* to evade the argument to prove the necessity of volition, from its necessary connection with the last dictate of the understanding, supposes the latter not to be diverse from the act of the will itself. But if it be so, it will not alter the case as to the evidence of the necessity of the act of the will. If the dictate of the understanding be the very same with the determination of the will or choice, as Dr. Clark supposes, then this determination is no fruit or effect of choice, and if so, no liberty of choice has any hand in it; as to volition or choice, it is necessary—that is, choice cannot prevent it. If the last dictate of the understanding be the same with the determination of volition itself, then the existence of that determination must be necessary as to volition, inasmuch as volition can have no opportunity to determine whether it shall exist or no, it having existence already before volition has opportunity to determine anything; it is itself the very rise and existence of volition. But a thing after it exists has no opportunity to determine as to its own existence—it is too late for that.

If liberty consists in that which Arminians suppose, namely, in the will's determining its own acts, having free opportunity, and being without all necessity, this is the same as to say, that liberty consists in the soul's having power and opportunity to have what determinations of the will it pleases or chooses. And if the determinations of the will and the last dictates of the understanding be the same thing, then liberty consists in the mind's having power to have what dictates of the

* Edit. 6th, p. 93.

understanding it pleases, having opportunity to choose its own dictates of understanding; but this is absurd, for it is to make the determination of choice prior to the dictate of understanding, and the ground of it, which cannot consist with the dictate of understanding's being the determination of choice itself.

Here is no way to do in this case but only to recur to the old absurdity of one determination before another, and the cause of it; and another before that, determining that; and so on *in infinitum*. If the last dictate of the understanding be the determination of the will itself, and the soul be free with regard to that dictate, in the Arminian notion of freedom, then the soul, before that dictate of its understanding exists, voluntarily, and according to its own choice, determines in every case what that dictate of the understanding shall be, otherwise that dictate, as to the will, is necessary, and the acts determined by it must also be necessary. So that, here is a determination of the mind prior to that dictate of the understanding, an act of choice going before it, choosing and determining what that dictate of the understanding shall be; and this preceding act of choice, being a free act of will, must also be the same with another last dictate of the understanding; and if the mind also be free in that dictate of understanding, that must be determined still by another, and so on for ever.

Besides, if the dictate of the understanding and determination of the will be the same, this confounds the understanding and will, and makes them the same. Whether they be the same or no, I will not now dispute, but only would observe that if it be so, and the Arminian notion of liberty consists in a self-determining power in the understanding free of all necessity, being independent, undetermined by any thing prior to its own acts and determinations—and the more the understanding is thus independent and sovereign over its own determinations, the more free—then, of course, the freedom of the soul, as a moral agent, must consist in the independence of the understanding on any evidence or appearance of things, or anything whatsoever that stands forth to the view of the mind prior to the understanding's determination. And what a sort of liberty is this! consisting in an ability, freedom, and easiness of judging, either according to evidence or against it,

having a sovereign command over itself at all times, to judge either agreeably or disagreeably to what is plainly exhibited to its own view. Certainly, it is no liberty that renders persons the proper subjects of persuasive reasoning, arguments, expostulations, and such like moral means and inducements, the use of which with mankind is a main argument of the Arminians, to defend their notion of liberty free of all necessity; for, according to this, the more free men are, the less they are under the government of such means, less subject to the power of evidence and reason, and more independent on their influence in their determinations.

However, whether the understanding and will are the same or no, as Dr. Clark seems to suppose, yet, in order to maintain the Arminian notion of liberty without necessity, the free will must not be determined by the understanding, nor necessarily connected with the understanding, and the further from such connection the greater the freedom. And when the liberty is full and complete, the determinations of the will must have no connection at all with the dictates of the understanding; and if so, in vain are all applications to the understanding in order to induce to any free virtuous act; and so in vain are all instructions, counsels, invitations, expostulations, and all arguments and persuasives whatsoever; for these are but applications to the understanding, and a clear and lively exhibition of the objects of choice to the mind's view; but if, after all, the will must be self-determined and independent on the understanding, to what purpose are things thus represented to the understanding, in order to determine the choice.

SECTION X.

Volition necessarily connected with the Influence of Motives, with particular Observations on the great Inconsistence of Mr. Chubb's Assertions and Reasonings about the Freedom of the Will.

That every act of the will has some cause, and, consequently, by what has been already proved, has a necessary connection with its cause, and so is necessary by a necessity of connection and consequence, is evident

by this, that every act of the will whatsoever is excited by some motive; which is manifest, because if the will or mind in willing and choosing after the manner that it does, is excited so to do by no motive or inducement, then it has no end which it proposes to itself or pursues in so doing; it aims at nothing, and seeks nothing. And if it seeks nothing, then it does not go after any thing, or exert any inclination or preference towards anything. Which brings the matter to a contradiction, because for the mind to will something, and for it to go after something by an act of preference and inclination, are the same thing.

But if every act of the will is excited by a motive, then that motive is the cause of the act of the will. If the acts of the will are excited by motives, then motives are the causes of their being excited—or, which is the same thing, the cause of their being put forth into act and existence. And if so, the existence of the acts of the will is properly the effect of their motives. Motives do nothing as motives or inducements, but by their influence, and so much as is done by their influence, is the effect of them. For that is the notion of an effect, something that is brought to pass by the influence of another thing.

And if volitions are properly the effects of their motives, then they are necessarily connected with their motives. Every effect and event being, as was proved before, necessarily connected with that which is the proper ground and reason of its existence. Thus it is manifest that volition is necessary, and is not from any self-determining power in the will; the volition which is caused by previous motive and inducement, is not caused by the will exercising a sovereign power over itself to determine, cause, and excite volitions in itself. This is not consistent with the will's acting in a state of indifference and equilibrium, to determine itself to a preference; for the way in which motives operate is by biassing the will, and giving it a certain inclination or preponderation one way.

Here it may be proper to observe that Mr. Chubb, in his Collection of Tracts on Various Subjects, has advanced a scheme of liberty, which is greatly divided against itself, and thoroughly subversive of itself, and that many ways.

I.—He is abundant in asserting that the will, in all its acts, is influenced by motive and excitement, and that this is the previous ground and reason of all its acts, and that it is never otherwise in any instance. He says, (page 262,) "No action can take place without some motive to excite it;" and in page 263, "Volition cannot take place without some *previous* reason or motive to induce it;" and in page 310, "Action would not take place without some reason or motive to induce it; it being absurd to suppose, that the active faculty would be exerted without some *previous* reason to dispose the mind to action;" so also page 257. And he speaks of these things as what we may be absolutely certain of, and which are the foundation, the only foundation, we have of a certainty of the moral perfections of God, pages 252, 253, 254, 255, 261, 262, 263, and 264.

And yet, at the same time, by this scheme, the influence of motives upon us to excite to action, and to be actually a ground of volition, is consequent on the volition or choice of the mind. For he very greatly insists upon it that in all free actions, before the mind is the subject of those volitions which motives excite, it chooses to be so. It chooses whether it will comply with the motive which presents itself in view, or not; and when various motives are presented, it chooses which it will yield to, and which it will reject. So, page 256, "Every man has power to act, or to refrain from acting, agreeably with, or contrary to, any motive that presents." Page 257, "Every man is at liberty to act, or refrain from acting, agreeably with, or contrary to, what each of these motives, considered singly, would excite him to. Man has power, and is as much at liberty, to reject the motive that does prevail, as he has power, and is at liberty to reject those motives that do not." And so, pages 310, 311, "In order to constitute a moral agent, it is necessary that he should have power to act, or to refrain from acting, upon such moral motives as he pleases." And to the like purpose in many other places. According to these things, the will acts first, and chooses or refuses to comply with the motive that is presented before it falls under its prevailing influence; and it is first determined by the mind's pleasure or choice what motives it will be induced by, before it is induced by them.

Now, how can these things hang together? How can the mind first act, and by its act of volition and choice determine what motives shall be the ground and reason of its volition and choice? For this supposes the choice is already made before the motive has its effect; and that the volition is already exerted before the motive prevails, so as actually to be the ground of the volition; and makes the prevailing of the motive the consequence of the volition, which yet it is the ground of. If the mind has already chosen to comply with a motive, and to yield to its excitement, it does not need to yield to it after this; for the thing is effected already that the motive would excite to, and the will is beforehand with the excitement; and the excitement comes in too late, and is needless and in vain afterwards. If the mind has already chosen to yield to a motive which invites to a thing, that implies and, in fact, is a choosing the thing invited to; and the very act of choice is before the influence of the motive which induces, and is the ground of the choice; the son is before-hand with the father that begets him. The choice is supposed to be the ground of that influence of the motive, which very influence is supposed to be the ground of the choice; and so *vice versa*, the choice is supposed to be the consequence of the influence of the motive, which influence of the motive is the consequence of that very choice.

And, besides, if the will acts first towards the motive before it falls under its influence, and the prevailing of the motive upon it to induce it to act and choose be the fruit and consequence of its act and choice, then how is the motive a *previous* ground and reason of the act and choice, so that in the nature of the thing volition cannot take place without some *previous* reason and motive to induce it; how is it that this act is consequent upon, and follows the motive? Which things Mr. Chubb often asserts, as of certain and undoubted truth; so that the very same motive is both previous and consequent, both before and after, both the ground and fruit of the very same thing.

II.—Agreeable to the fore-mentioned inconsistent notion of the will's first acting towards the motive, choosing whether it will comply with it, in order to its becoming a ground of the will's acting before any act of volition can take place, Mr. Chubb frequently calls

motives and excitements to the action of the will, the passive ground or reason of that action. Which is a remarkable phrase; than which, I presume, there is none more unintelligible and void of distinct and consistent meaning in all the writings of Duns Scotus or Thomas Aquinas. When he represents the motive to action or volition as passive, he must mean passive in that affair, or passive with respect to that action which he speaks of; otherwise, it is nothing to his purpose, or relating to the design of his argument; he must mean—if that can be called a meaning—that the motive to volition is first acted upon or towards by the volition choosing to yield to it, making it a ground of action or determining to fetch its influence from thence, and so to make it a previous ground of its own excitation and existence; which is the same absurdity as if one should say, that the soul of man, or any other thing, should, previous to its existing, choose what cause it would come into existence by, and should act upon its cause to fetch influence from thence to bring it into being, and so its cause should be a passive ground of its existence!

Mr. Chubb does very plainly suppose motive or excitement to be the ground of the being of volition. He speaks of it as the ground or reason of the *exertion* of an act of the will, (pages 391 and 392,) and expressly says that volition cannot *take place* without some previous ground or motive to induce it, (page 363;) and he speaks of the act as *from* the motive, and *from the influence* of the motive, (page 352,) and from the influence that the motive has on the man, for the *production* of an action, (page 317.) Certainly, there is no need of multiplying words about this; it is easily judged whether motive can be the ground of volition's being exerted and taking place, so that the very production of it is from the influence of the motive, and yet the motive, before it becomes the ground of the volition, be passive, or acted upon by the volition. But this I will say, that a man who insists so much on clearness of meaning in others, and is so much in blaming their confusion and inconsistence, ought, if he was able, to have explained his meaning in this phrase of passive ground of action, so as to show it not to be confused and inconsistent.

If any should suppose that Mr. Chubb, when he speaks of motive as a passive ground of action, does

not mean passive with regard to that volition which it is the ground of, but some other antecedent volition (though his purpose and argument, and whole discourse, will by no means allow of such a supposition,) yet it would not help the matter in the least. For, firstly, if we suppose that there is an act of volition or choice, by which the soul chooses to yield to the invitation of a motive to another volition, by which the soul chooses something else; both these supposed volitions are in effect the very same. A volition, or choosing to yield to the force of a motive inviting to choose something, comes to just the same thing as choosing the thing which the motive invites to, as I observed before; so that here can be no room to help the matter by a distinction of two volitions. Secondly, if the motive be passive, with respect not to the same volition that the motive excites to, but one truly distinct and prior, yet, by Mr. Chubb, that prior volition cannot take place without a motive or excitement as a previous ground of its existence; for he insists that it is absurd to suppose any volition should take place without some previous motive to induce it; so that, at last, it comes to just the same absurdity; for if every volition must have a previous motive, then the very first in the whole series must be excited by a previous motive; and yet the motive to that first volition is passive, but cannot be passive with regard to another antecedent volition, because, by the supposition, it is the very first; therefore, if it be passive with respect to any volition, it must be so with regard to that very volition that is the ground of, and that is excited by it.

III.—Though Mr. Chubb asserts, as above, that every volition has some motive, and that, in the nature of the thing, no volition can take place without some motive to induce it, yet he asserts that volition does not always follow the strongest motive, or, in other words, is not governed by any superior strength of the motive that is followed beyond motives to the contrary, previous to the volition itself. His own words (page 258) are as follows:—"Though with regard to physical causes, that which is strongest always prevails, yet it is otherwise with regard to moral causes. Of these, sometimes the stronger, sometimes the weaker, prevails; and the ground of this difference is evident, namely, that what we call moral causes, strictly speaking, are no causes at

all, but barely passive reasons of, or excitements to, the action, or to the refraining from acting which excitements we have power or are at liberty to comply with or reject, as I have showed above." And so throughout the paragraph, he, in a variety of phrases, insists that the will is not always determined by the strongest motive, unless by strongest we preposterously mean actually prevailing in the event, which is not in the motive, but in the will; so that the will is not always determined by the motive which is strongest, by any strength previous to the volition itself. And he elsewhere does abundantly assert that the will is determined by no superior strength or advantage that motives have from any constitution or state of things, or any circumstances whatsoever, previous to the actual determination of the will; and, indeed, his whole discourse on human liberty implies it—his whole scheme is founded upon it.

But these things cannot stand together. There is such a thing as a diversity of strength in motives to choice, previous to the choice itself. Mr. Chubb himself supposes that they do previously invite, induce, excite, and dispose the mind to action. This implies that they have something in themselves that is inviting —some tendency to induce and dispose to volition, previous to volition itself; and if they have in themselves this nature and tendency, doubtless they have it in certain limited degrees, which are capable of diversity; and some have it in greater degrees, others in less; and they that have most of this tendency, considered with all their nature and circumstances previous to volition, they are the strongest motives; and those that have least, are the weakest motives.

Now, if volition sometimes does not follow the motive which is strongest, or has most previous tendency or advantage, all things considered, to induce or excite it, but follows the weakest, or that which as it stands previously in the mind's view, has least tendency to induce it, herein the will apparently acts wholly without motive, without any previous reason to dispose the mind to it, contrary to what the same author supposes. The act wherein the will must proceed without previous motive to induce it, is the act of preferring the weakest motive. For how absurd it is to say, the mind sees previous reason in the motive to prefer that motive before the

other, and at the same time to suppose that there is nothing in the motive, in its nature, state, or any circumstance of it whatsoever, as it stands in the previous view of the mind, that gives it any preference; but, on the contrary, the other motive that stands in competition with it, in all these respects, has most belonging to it that is inviting and moving, and has most of a tendency to choice and preference? This is, certainly, as much as to say, there is previous ground and reason in the motive for the act of preference, and yet no previous reason for it. By the supposition, as to all that is in the two rival motives which tends to preference, previous to the act of preference, it is not in that which is preferred, but wholly in the other; because appearing superior strength and all appearing preferableness is in that; and yet Mr. Chubb supposes that the act of preference is from previous ground and reason in the motive which is preferred. But are these things consistent? Can there be previous ground in a thing for an event that takes place, and yet no previous tendency in it to that event? If one thing follows another, without any previous tendency to its following, then I should think it very plain that it follows it without any manner of previous reason why it should follow.

Yea, in this case, Mr. Chubb supposes that the event follows an antecedent, or a previous thing, as the ground of its existence, not only that has no tendency to it, but a contrary tendency. The event is the preference which the mind gives to that motive which is weaker, as it stands in the previous view of the mind; the immediate antecedent is the view the mind has of the two rival motives conjunctly; in which previous view of the mind all the preferableness, or previous tendency to preference, is supposed to be on the other side, or in the contrary motive; and all the unworthiness of preference, and so previous tendency to comparative neglect, rejection or undervaluing, is on that side which is preferred; And yet in this view of the mind is supposed to be the previous ground or reason of this act of preference, exciting it, and disposing the mind to it. Which I leave the reader to judge whether it be absurd or not. If it be not, then it is not absurd to say that the previous tendency of an antecedent to to a consequent is the ground and reason why that consequent does not follow; and the want of a previous tendency to an event, yea, a

tendency to the contrary, is the true ground and reason why that event does follow.

An act of choice or preference is a comparative act, wherein the mind acts with reference to two or more things that are compared and stand in competition in the mind's view. If the mind, in this comparative act, prefers that which appears inferior in the comparison, then the mind herein acts absolutely without motive or inducement, or any temptation whatsoever. Then, if a hungry man has the offer of two sorts of food, both which he finds an appetite to, but has a stronger appetite to one than the other; and there be no circumstances or excitements whatsoever in the case to induce him to take either the one or the other, but merely his appetite; if in the choice he makes between them, he chooses that which he has least appetite to, and refuses that to which he has the strongest appetite, this is a choice made absolutely without previous motive, excitement, reason, or temptation, as much as if he were perfectly without all appetite to either; because his volition in this case is a comparative act, attending and following a comparative view of the food which he chooses, viewing it as related to and compared with the other sort of food, in which view his preference has absolutely no previous ground, yea, is against all previous ground and motive. And if there be any principle in man from whence an act of choice may arise after this manner, from the same principle volition may arise wholly without motive on either side. If the mind in its volition can go beyond motive, then it can go without motive; for when it is beyond the motive, it is out of the reach of the motive, out of the limits of its influence, and so without motive. If volition goes beyond the strength and tendency of motive, and especially if it goes against its tendency, this demonstrates the independence of volition or motive; and if so, no reason can be given for what Mr Chubb so often asserts, even that in the nature of things volition cannot take place without a motive to induce it.

If the Most High should endow a balance with agency or activity of nature, in such a manner that when unequal weights are put into the scales, its agency could enable it to cause that scale to descend which has the least weight, and so to raise the greater weight, this would clearly demonstrate that the motion of the balance

does not depend on weights in the scales, at least as much as if the balance should move itself when there is no weight in either scale. And the activity of the balance which is sufficient to move itself against the greater weight, must certainly be more than sufficient to move it when there is no weight at all.

Mr. Chubb supposes that the will cannot stir at all without some motive; and also supposes that if there be a motive to one thing, and none to the contrary, volition will infallibly follow that motive. This is virtually to suppose an entire dependence of the will on motives. If it were not wholly dependent on them, it could surely help itself a little without them, or help itself a little against a motive, without help from the strength and weight of a contrary motive. And yet his supposing that the will, when it has before it various opposite motives, can use them as it pleases, and choose its own influence from them, and neglect the strongest, and follow the weakest, supposes it to be wholly independent on motives.

It further appears, on Mr. Chubb's supposition, that volition must be without any previous ground in any motive, thus, if it be, as he supposes, that the will is not determined by any previous superior strength of the motive, but, determines and chooses its own motive, then, when the rival motives are exactly equal in strength and tendency to induce in all respects, it may follow either, and may, in such a case, sometimes follow one, sometimes the other; and if so, this diversity, which appears between the acts of the will, is plainly without previous ground in either of the motives; for all that is previously in the motives is supposed precisely and perfectly the same, without any diversity whatsoever. Now, perfect identity, as to all that is previous to the antecedent, cannot be the ground and reason of diversity in the consequent. Perfect identity in the ground cannot be a reason why it is not followed with the same consequence; and, therefore, the source of this diversity of consequence must be sought for elsewhere.

And, lastly, it may be observed, that however Mr. Chubb does much insist that no volition can take place without some motive to induce it, which previously

disposes the mind to it, yet, as he also insists that the mind without reference to any previous superior strength of motives picks and chooses for its motives to follow, he himself herein plainly supposes, that with regard to the mind's preference of one motive before another, it is not the motive that disposes the will, but the will disposes itself to follow the motive.

IV.—Mr. Chubb supposes necessity to be utterly inconsistent with agency, and that to suppose a being to be an agent in that which is necessary, is a plain contradiction, (page 311;) and throughout his discourses on the subject of liberty, he supposes that necessity cannot consist with agency or free dom; and that to sup pose otherwise, is to make liberty and necessity, action and passion, the same thing. And so he seems to suppose that there is no action, strictly speaking, but volition; and that as to the effects of volition in body or mind, in themselves considered, being necessary, they are said to be free only as they are the effects of an act that is not necessary.

And yet, according to him, volition itself is the effect of volition; yea, every act of free volition; and, therefore, every act of free volition must, by what has now been observed from him, be necessary. That every act of free volition is itself the effect of volition is abundantly supposed by him In page 341 he says, "If a man is such a creature as I have above proved him to be, that is, if he has in him a power or liberty of doing either good or evil, and either of these is the subject of his own free choice, so that he might, *if he had pleased* have *chosen* and done the contrary," &c. Here he supposes all that is good or evil in man is the effect of his choice, and so that his good or evil choice itself is the effect of his pleasure or choice, in these words, "He might, if he had *pleased*, have *chosen* the contrary." So, in page 356, "Though it be highly reasonable, that a man should always choose the greater good, yet he may, if he *please*, *choose* otherwise." Which is the same thing as if he had said, he may, if he chooses, choose otherwise. And then he goes on, "That is, he may, if he pleases, choose what is good for himself," &c. And again, in the same page, "The will is not confined by the understanding to any particular sort of good, whether greater or less, but is at liberty to choose what kind of good it

pleases." If there be any meaning in the last words, the meaning must be this, that the will is at liberty to choose what kind of good it chooses to choose, supposing the act of choice itself determined by an antecedent choice. The liberty Mr. Chubb speaks of is not only a man's having power to move his body agreeably to an antecedent act of choice, but to use or exert the faculties of his soul. Thus, in page 379, speaking of the faculties of his mind, he says, "Man has power, and is at liberty, to neglect these faculties, to use them aright, or to abuse them, as he pleases." And that he supposes an act of choice, or exercise of pleasure, properly distinct from, and antecedent to, those acts thus chosen, directing, commanding, and producing the chosen acts, and even the acts of choice themselves, is very plain in page 283, "He can command his actions; and herein consists his liberty; he can give or deny himself that pleasure as he pleases;" and page 377, "If the actions of men are not the produce of a free choice, or election, but spring from a necessity of nature, he cannot in reason be the object of reward or punishment on their account; whereas, if action in man, whether good or evil, is the produce of will or free choice, so that a man in either case, had it in his power, and was at liberty to have *chosen* the contrary, he is the proper object of reward or punishment, according as he *chooses* to behave himself." Here, in these last words, he speaks of liberty of *choosing*, according as he *chooses*. So that the behaviour which he speaks of as subject to his choice is his choosing itself, as well as his external conduct consequent upon it. And, therefore, it is evident, he means not only external actions, but the acts of choice themselves, when he speaks of all free actions, as the *produce* of free choice. And this is abundantly evident in what he says in pages 372 and 373.

Now these things imply a twofold great absurdity and inconsistence.

Firstly—To suppose, as Mr. Chubb plainly does, that every free act of choice is commanded by, and is the produce of, free choice, is to suppose the first free act of choice belonging to the case, yea, the first free act of choice that ever man exerted, to be the produce of an antecedent act of choice. But I hope I need not labour at all to convince my readers, that it is an absurdity to

say, the very first act is the produce of another act that went before it.

Secondly—If it were both possible and real, as Mr. Chubb insists, that every free act of choice were the produce or the effect of a free act of choice, yet even then, according to his principles, no one act of choice would be free, but every one necessary; because every act of choice being the effect of a foregoing act, every act would be necessarily connected with that foregoing cause. For Mr. Chubb himself says, page 389, "When the self-moving power is exerted, it becomes the necessary cause of its effects." So that his notion of a free act, that is rewardable or punishable, is a heap of contradictions. It is a free act, and yet, by his own notion of freedom, is necessary; and, therefore, by him it is a contradiction to suppose it to be free. According to him, every free act is the produce of a free act; so that there must be an infinite number of free acts in succession, without any beginning, in an agent that has a beginning. And, therefore, here is an infinite number of free acts, every one of them free, and yet not any one of them free, but every act in the whole infinite chain a necessary effect. All the acts are rewardable or punishable, and yet the agent cannot, in reason, be the object of reward or punishment, on account of any one of these actions. He is active in them all, and passive in none, yet active in none, but passive in all, &c.

V.—Mr. Chubb does most strenuously deny that motives are causes of the acts of the will, or that the moving principle in man is moved, or caused to be exerted, by motives. His words, pages 388 and 389, are, "If the moving principle in man is *moved*, or *caused to be exerted*, by something external to man, which all motives are, then it would not be a self-moving principle, seeing it would be moved by a principle external to itself; and to say that a self-moving principle is *moved*, or *caused to be exerted*, by a cause external to itself, is absurd, and a contradiction," &c. And in the next page it is particularly and largely insisted, that motives are causes in no case, that they are merely passive in the production of action, and have no causality in the production of it—no causality to be the cause of the exertion of the will.

Now, I desire it may be considered how this can possibly consist with what he says in other places. Let it be noted here :—

Firstly—Mr. Chubb abundantly speaks of motives as excitements of the acts of the will, and says that motives do excite volition and induce it, and that they are necessary to this end—that in the reason and nature of things volition cannot take place without motives to excite it. But now, if motives excite the will, they move it; and yet he says, it is absurd to say, the will is moved by motives. And again—if language is of any significancy at all—if motives excite volition, then they are the cause of its being excited; and to cause volition to be excited, is to cause it to be put forth or exerted. Yea, Mr. Chubb says himself, page 317, motive is necessary to the exertion of the active faculty. To excite, is positively to do something; and, certainly, that which does something, is the cause of the thing done by it. To create, is to cause to be created; to make, is to cause to be made; to kill, is to cause to be killed; to quicken, is to cause to be quickened; and to excite, is to cause to be excited. To excite, is to be a cause, in the most proper sense, not merely a negative occasion, but a ground of existence by positive influence. The notion of exciting, is exerting influence to cause the effect to arise or come forth into existence.

Secondly—Mr. Chubb himself, page 317, speaks of motives as the ground and reason of action *by influence*, and *by prevailing influence*. Now, what can be meant by a cause but something that is the ground and reason of a thing by its influence, an influence that is prevalent and so effectual?

Thirdly—This author not only speaks of motives as the ground and reason of action, by prevailing influence, but expressly of their influence as prevailing *for the production* of an action, in the same page; which makes the inconsistency still more palpable and notorious. The production of an effect is certainly the causing of an effect; and productive influence is causal influence, if anything is; and that which has this influence prevalently, so as thereby to become the ground of another thing, is a cause of that thing, if there be any such thing as a cause. This influence, Mr. Chubb says,

motives have to produce an action; and yet he says, it is absurd and a contradiction to say they are causes.

Fourthly—In the same page, he once and again speaks of motives as disposing the agent to action by their influence. His words are these, "As motive, which takes place in the understanding, and is the product of intelligence, is *necessary* to action—that is, to the *exertion* of the active faculty, because that faculty would not be exerted without some *previous reason* to *dispose* the mind to action—so from hence it plainly appears, that when a man is said to be disposed to one action rather than another, this properly signifies the *prevailing influence* that one motive has upon a man *for the production* of an action, or for the being at rest, before all other motives, for the production of the contrary. For as motive is the ground and reason of any action, so the motive that prevails, *disposes* the agent to the performance of that action."

Now, if motives dispose the mind to action, then they cause the mind to be disposed; and to cause the mind to be disposed, is to cause it to be willing; and to cause it to be willing, is to cause it to will; and that is the same thing as to be the cause of an act of the will. And yet this same Mr. Chubb holds it to be absurd to suppose motive to be a cause of the act of the will.

And if we compare these things together, we have here again a whole heap of inconsistencies. Motives are the previous ground and reason of the acts of the will; yea, the necessary ground and reason of their exertion, without which they will not be exerted, and cannot in the nature of things take place; and they do excite these acts of the will, and do this by a prevailing influence; yea, an influence which prevails for the production of the act of the will, and for the disposing of the mind to it; and yet it is absurd, to suppose motive to be a cause of an act of the will, or that a principle of will is moved or caused to be exerted by it, or that it has any causality in the production of it, or any causality to be the cause of the exertion of the will.

A due consideration of these things which Mr. Chubb has advanced—the strange inconsistencies which the notion of liberty consisting in the will's power of

self-determination void of all necessity, united with that dictate of common sense, that there can be no volition without a motive, drove him into—may be sufficient to convince us, that it is utterly impossible ever to make that notion of liberty consistent with the influence of motives in volition. And as it is, in a manner, self-evident that there can be no act of will, choice, or preference of the mind without some motive or inducement—something in the mind's view which it aims at, seeks, inclines to, and goes after—so it is most manifest, there is no such liberty in the universe as Arminians insist on; nor any such thing possible, or conceivable.

SECTION XI.

The Evidence of God's certain Foreknowledge of the Volitions of Moral Agents.

That the acts of the wills of moral agents are not contingent events, in that sense as to be without all necessity, appears by God's certain foreknowledge of such events.

In handling this argument, I would, in the first place, prove that God has a certain foreknowledge of the voluntary acts of moral agents; and, secondly, show the consequence, or how it follows from hence, that the volitions of moral agents are not contingent, so as to be without necessity of connection and consequence.

Firstly—I am to prove, that God has an absolute and certain foreknowledge of the free actions of moral agents.

One would think, it should be wholly needless to enter on such an argument with any that profess themselves Christians; but so it is; God's certain foreknowledge of the free acts of moral agents is denied by some that pretend to believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and especially of late. I therefore shall consider the evidence of such a prescience in the Most High as fully as the designed limits of this essay will admit of, supposing myself herein to have to do with such as own the truth of the Bible.

ARGUMENT I.—My first argument shall be taken from God's prediction of such events. Here I would, in the first place, lay down these two things as axioms:—

Firstly—If God do not foreknow, he cannot foretell such events; that is, he cannot peremptorily and certainly foretell them. If God has no more than an uncertain guess concerning events of this kind, then he can declare no more than an uncertain guess. Positively to foretell is to profess to foreknow, or to declare positive foreknowledge.

Secondly—If God do not certainly foreknow the future volitions of moral agents, then neither can he certainly foreknow those events which are consequent and dependent on these volitions. The existence of the one depending on the existence of the other, the knowledge of the existence of the one depends on the knowledge of the existence of the other; and the one cannot be more certain than the other.

Therefore, how many, how great, and how extensive soever the consequences of the volitions of moral agents may be, though they should extend to an alteration of the state of things through the universe, and should be continued in a series of successive events to all eternity, and should, in the progress of things, branch forth into an infinite number of series, each of them going on in an endless line or chain of events, God must be as ignorant of all these consequences, as he is of the volition whence they first take their rise. All these events, and the whole state of things depending on them, how important, extensive and vast soever, must be hid from him.

These positions being such as I suppose none will deny, I now proceed to observe the following things:—

I.—Men's moral conduct and qualities, their virtues and vices, their wickedness and good practice, things rewardable and punishable, have often been foretold by God. Pharaoh's moral conduct in refusing to obey God's command, in letting his people go, was foretold. God says to Moses, (Exod. iii. 19,) "I am sure that the King of Egypt will not let you go." Here God professes not only to guess at, but to know Pharaoh's future disobedience.

In chap. vii., 4., God says, "But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that I may lay mine hand upon Egypt," &c. And chap. ix., 30, Moses says to Pharaoh, "As for thee and thy servants, I *know* that ye will not fear the Lord." See also xi., 9. The moral conduct of Josiah, by name, in his zealously exerting himself in opposition to idolatry, in particular acts of his, was foretold above three hundred years before he was born, and the prophecy sealed by a miracle, and renewed and confirmed by the words of a second prophet, as what surely would not fail, (1 Kings xiii. 1, 6, 32.) This prophecy was also in effect a prediction of the moral conduct of the people, in upholding their schismatical and idolatrous worship until that time, and the idolatry of those priests of the high places, which it is foretold Josiah should offer upon that altar of Bethel. Micaiah foretold the foolish and sinful conduct of Ahab, in refusing to hearken to the word of the Lord by him, and choosing rather to hearken to the false prophets, in going to Ramoth-Gilead to his ruin, (1 Kings xxi., 20, 22.) The moral conduct of Hazael was foretold, in that cruelty he should be guilty of; on which Hazael says, "What, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing!" The prophet speaks of the event as what he knew, and not what he conjectured, (2 Kings viii., 12,) "I know the evit that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel; thou will dash their children, and rip up their women with child." The moral conduct of Cyrus is foretold, long before he had a being, in his mercy to God's people, and regard to the true God, in turning the captivity of the Jews, and promoting the building of the temple, (Isaiah xliv., 28, and xlv., 13. Compare 2 Chron. xxxvi., 22, 23, and Ezra i., 1, 4.) How many instances of the moral conduct of the kings of the north and south, particular instances of the wicked behaviour of the kings of Syria and Egypt, are foretold in the 11th chapter of Daniel? Their corruption, violence, robbery, treachery and lies. And, particularly, how much is foretold of the horrid wickedness of Antiochus Epiphanes, called there a vile person, instead of Epiphanes, or Illustrious. In that chapter, and also in chapter viii. 9, 14, 23 to the end, are foretold his flattery, deceit and lies, his having his heart set to do mischief, and set against the holy covenant, his destroying and treading under foot the holy people, in a marvellous manner, his having indignation against the holy covenant, setting his heart against it, and conspiring against it, his polluting the sanctuary of

strength, treading it under foot, taking away the daily sacrifice, and placing the abomination that maketh desolate; his great pride, magnifying himself against God, and uttering marvellous blasphemies against Him, until God in indignation should destroy him. Withal, the moral conduct of the Jews, on the occasion of his persecution, is predicted. It is foretold, that he should corrupt many by flatteries, (chap. xi., 32, 34,) but that others should behave with a glorious constancy and fortitude, in opposition to him, (verse 32;) and that some good men should fall and repent, (verse 35.) Christ foretold Peter's sin, in denying his Lord, with its circumstances, in a peremptory manner; and so that great sin of Judas, in betraying his Master, and its dreadful and eternal punishment in Hell, was foretold in the like positive manner, (Matt. xxvi., 21, 25, and parallel places in the other Evengelists).

II.—Many events have been foretold by God, which were consequent and dependent on the moral conduct of particular persons, and were accomplished, either by their virtuous or vicious actions. Thus, the Children of Israel's going down into Egypt to dwell there, was foretold to Abraham, (Gen. xv.,) which was brought about by the wickedness of Joseph's brethren in selling him, and the wickedness of Joseph's mistress, and his own signal virtue in resisting her temptation. The accomplishment of the thing prefigured in Joseph's dream depended on the same moral conduct. Jotham's parable and prophecy, (Judges ix., 15 to 20,) was accomplished by the wicked conduct of Abimelech and the men of Shechem. The prophecies against the House of Eli, (1 Sam., chapters ii. and iii.,) were accomplished by the wickedness of Doeg, the Edomite, in accusing the priests, and the great impiety and extreme cruelty of Saul in destroying the priests at Nob, (1 Sam. xxii.) Nathan's prophecy against David, (2 Sam. xii., 11 and 12,) was fulfilled by the horrible wickedness of Absolom, in rebelling against his father, seeking his life, and lying with his concubines in the sight of the sun. The prophecy against Solomon, (1 Kings xi., 11 to 13,) was fulfilled by Jeroboam's rebellion and usurpation, which are spoken of as his wickedness, (2 Chron. xiii., 5 and 6; compare ver. 18.) The prophecy against Jeroboam's family, (1 Kings xiv.,) was fulfilled by the conspiracy, treason, and cruel murders of Baasha, (1 Kings xv., 27, &c.) The

predictions of the Prophet Jehu against the House of Baasha, (1 Kings xvi., at the beginning,) were fulfilled by the treason and parricide of Zimri, (1 Kings xvi., 9, 13, 20.)

III.—How often has God foretold the future moral conduct of nations and peoples, of numbers, bodies, and successions of men, with God's judicial proceedings, and many other events consequent and dependent on their virtues and vices, which could not be foreknown if the volitions of men, wherein they acted as moral agents, had not been foreseen? The future cruelty of the Egyptians in oppressing Israel, and God's judging and punishing them for it, was foretold long before it came to pass, (Gen. xv., 13, 14.) The continuance of the iniquity of the Amorites, and the increase of it until it should be full, and they ripe for destruction, was foretold above four hundred years beforehand, (Gen. xv., 16, Acts, vii. 6, 7.) The prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Land of Judah, were absolute, (2 Kings, xx., 17, 19., xxii., 15 to the end.) It was foretold in Hezekiah's time, and was abundantly insisted on in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, who wrote nothing after Hezekiah's days. It was foretold in Josiah's time, in the beginning of a great reformation, (2 Kings xxii.) And it is manifest by innumerable things in the predictions of the prophets, relating to this event, its time, its circumstances, its continuance and end; the return from the captivity, the restoration of the temple, city and land, and many circumstances and consequences of that; I say, these show plainly. that the prophecies of this great event were absolute. And yet this event was connected with, and dependent on, two things in men's moral conduct—firstly, the injurious rapine and violence of the King of Babylon and his people, as the efficient cause, which God often speaks of as what he highly resented, and would severely punish; and, secondly, the final obstinacy of the Jews. That great event is often spoken of as suspended on this, (Jer. iv., 1, and v., 1, vii., 1, 7, xi., 1, 6, xvii., 24 to the end, xxv., 1, 7, xxvi., 1, 8, 13, and xxxviii., 17, 18.) Therefore, this destruction and captivity could not be foreknown, unless such a moral conduct of the Chaldeans and Jews had been foreknown. And then it was foretold, that the people should be finally obstinate, to the destruction and utter desolation of the city and land. (Isai. vi., 9, 11; Jer. i., 18, 19, vii., 27, 29; Ezek. iii., 7., and xxiv., 13, 14.)

The final obstinacy of those Jews who were left in the Land of Israel, and who afterwards went down into Egypt, in their idolatry and rejection of the true God, was foretold by God, and the prediction confirmed with an oath, (Jer. xliv., 26, 27.) And God tells the people, (Isai. xlviii., 3, 4, 8,) that he had predicted those things which should be consequent on their treachery and obstinacy, because he knew they would be obstinate; and that he had declared these things beforehand, for their conviction of his being the only true God, &c.

The destruction of Babylon, with many of the circumstances of it, was foretold, as the judgment of God for the exceeding pride and haughtiness of the heads of that monarchy, Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, and their wickedly destroying other nations, and particularly for their exalting themselves against the true God and his people, before any of these monarchs had a being, (Isai. chaps. xiii., xiv., xlvii. Compare Habbak., ii., 5 to the end; and Jer. chap. l. and li.) That Babylon's destruction was to be a recompense, according to the works of their own hands, appears by Jer. xxv., 14. The immorality which the people of Babylon, and particularly her princes and great men, were guilty of, that very night that the city was destroyed, their revelling and drunkenness at Belshazzar's idolatrous feast, was foretold, (Jer. li., 39, 57.)

The return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity is often very particularly foretold, with many circumstances, and the promises of it are very peremptory, (Jer. xxxi., 35, 40, and xxxii., 6 to 15, 41 to 44, and xxxiii. 24 to 26.) And the very time of their return was prefixed, (Jer. xxv., 11, 12, and xxix., 10, 11; 2 Chron. xxxvi., 21; Ezek. iv., 6; and Dan. ix., 2.) And yet the prophecies represent their return as consequent on their repentance; and their repentance itself is very expressly and particularly foretold, (Jer. xxix., 12, 13, 14, xxxi., 8, 9, 18, 31, l., 4, 5; Ezek. vi., 8, 9, 10, vii., 16, xiv., 22, 23, and xx., 43, 44.)

It was foretold under the Old Testament, that the Messiah should suffer greatly through the malice and cruelty of men, as is largely and fully set forth, (Psal. xxii.,) applied to Christ in the New Testament, (Matt. xxvii., 35, 43; Luke xxiii., 34; John xix., 24; Heb. ii., 12.)

And likewise in Psal. lxix, which, it is also evident by the New Testament, is spoken of Christ, (John ii., 17, xv., 25; Rom. xv., 3; Matt. xxvii., 34, 48; Mark xv., 23; and John xix., 29.) The same thing is also foretold, (Isai. l., 6, and liii., and Mic. v., 1.) This cruelty of men was their sin, and what they acted as moral agents. It was foretold that there should be an union of Heathen and Jewish rulers against Christ, (Psal. ii., 1, 2, compared with Acts iv., 25, 28.) It was foretold that the Jews should generally reject and despise the Messiah, (Isai. xlix., 5, 6, 7, and liii., 1, 3; Psal. xxii, 6, 7, and lxix., 4, 8, 19, 20.) And it was foretold that the body of that nation should be rejected in the Messiah's days, from being God's people, for their obstinacy in sin, (Isai. xlix., 4, 7, and viii., 14, 15, 16, compared with Rom. ix., 33, and Isai. lxv., at the beginning, compared with Rom. x., 20, 21.) It was foretold that Christ should be rejected by the chief priests and rulers among the Jews, (Psalm cxviii., 22, compared with Matt. xxi., 42; Acts iv., 11; 1 Pet. ii., 4, 7.)

Christ himself foretold his being delivered into the hands of the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and his being cruelly treated by them, and condemned to death; and that he by them should be delivered to the Gentiles; and that he should be mocked, and scourged, and crucified, (Matt. xvi., 21, and xx., 17, 19; Luke ix., 22; John viii., 28;) and that the people should be concerned in, and consenting to, his death, (Luke xx., 13, 18,) especially the inhabitants of Jerusalem, (Luke xiii., 33, 35.) He foretold that the disciples should all be offended because of him that night that he was betrayed, and should forsake him, (Matt. xxvi., 31; John xvi., 32.) He foretold that he should be rejected of that generation, even the body of the people, and that they should continue obstinate to their ruin, (Matt. xii., 45, xxi., 33, 42, and xxii., 1, 7; Luke xiv., 16, 21, 24, xvii., 25, xix., 14, 27, 41, 44, and xx., 13, 18.

As it was foretold in both Old Testament and New, that the Jews should reject the Messiah, so it was foretold that the Gentiles should receive him, and so be admitted to the privileges of God's people, in places too many to be now particularly mentioned. It was foretold in the Old Testament, that the Jews should envy the *Gentiles on this* account, (Deut. xxxii., 21, compared

with Rom, x., 19.) Christ himself often foretold that the Gentiles would embrace the true religion, and become his followers and people, (Matt. viii., 10, 11, 12, xxi., 41, 43, and xxii., 8, 10; Luke xiii., 28, xiv., 16, 24, and xx., 16; John x., 16.) He also foretold the Jews' envy of the Gentiles on this occasion, (Matt. xx., 12, 16; Luke xv., 26, to the end). He foretold that they should continue in this opposition and envy, and should manifest it in cruel persecutions of his followers, to their utter destruction, (Matt. xxi., 33, 42, xxii., 6, and xxiii., 34, 39; Luke xi., 49, 51.) The Jews obstinacy is also foretold, (Acts xxii., 18.) Christ often foretold the great persecutions his followers should meet with, both from Jews and Gentiles, (Matt. x., 16, 18, 21, 22, 34, 36, and xxiv.; 9; Mark xiii., 9; Luke x., 3, xii., 11, 49, 53, and xxi., 12, 16, 17; John xv., 18, 21, and xvi., 1, 4.) He foretold the martyrdom of particular persons, (Matt. xx. 23; John xiii., 36, and xxi., 18, 19, 22.) He foretold the great success of the Gospel in the City of Samaria, as near approaching, which afterwards was fulfilled by the preaching of Philip, (John iv., 35, 38.) He foretold the rising of many deceivers after his departure, (Matt. xxiv. 4, 5, 11,) and the apostacy of many of his professed followers, (Matt. xxiv., 10, 12.)

The persecutions which the Apostle Paul was to meet with in the world, were foretold, (Acts ix., 16, xx., 23, and xxi., 11.) The Apostle says to the Christian Ephesians, (Acts xx., 29, 30,) "I know, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock; also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." The Apostle says he knew this; but he did not know it if God did not know the future actions of moral agents.

IV.—Unless God foreknows the future actions of moral agents, all the prophecies we have in Scripture concerning the great Antichristian apostacy—the rise, reign, wicked qualities, and deeds of the Man of Sin, and his instruments and adherents—the extent and long continuance of his dominion, his influence on the minds of princes and others, to corrupt them, and draw them away to idolatry, and other foul vices—his great and cruel persecutions, the behaviour of the Saints under these great temptations, &c., &c.; I say, unless

the volitions of moral agents are foreseen, all these prophecies are uttered without knowing the things foretold.

The predictions relating to this great apostacy are all of a moral nature, relating to men's virtues and vices, and their exercises, fruits, and consequences, and events depending on them, and are very particular, and most of them often repeated, with many precise characteristics, descriptions, and limitations of qualities, conduct, influence, effects, extent, duration, periods, circumstances, final issue, &c., which it would be very long to mention particularly; and to suppose all these are predicted by God without any certain knowledge of the future moral behaviour of free agents, would be to the utmost degree absurd.

V.—Unless God foreknows the future acts of men's wills, and their behaviour as moral agents, all those great things which are foretold in both Old Testament and New concerning the erection, establishment, and universal extent of the Kingdom of the Messiah, were predicted and promised while God was in ignorance whether any of these things would come to pass or no, and did but guess at them. For that kindom is not of this world, it does not consist in things external, but is within men, and consists in the dominion of virtue in their hearts, in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and in these things made manifest in practice, to the praise and glory of God. The Messiah came to save men from their sins, and deliver them from their spiritual enemies, that they might serve him in righteousness and holiness before him; he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. And, therefore, his success consists in gaining men's hearts to virtue, in their being made God's willing people in the day of his power. His conquest of his enimies consists in his victory over men's corruptions and vices; and such success, such victory, and such a reign and dominion is often expressly foretold; that his kingdom should fill the earth; that all people, nations and languages should serve and obey him; and so, that all nations should go up to the mountain of the House of the Lord, that he might teach them his ways, and that they *might walk in* his paths; and that all men should be

drawn to Christ, and the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord—by which, in the style of scripture, is meant true virtue and religion—as the water over the seas; that God's law should be put into men's inward parts, and written in their hearts, and that God's people should be all righteous, &c., &c.

A very great part of the prophecies of the Old Testament is taken up in such predictions as these. And here I would observe, that the prophecies of the universal prevalence of the Kingdom of the Messiah, and true religion of Jesus Christ, are delivered in the most peremptory manner, and confirmed by the oath of God, (Isai. xlv., 22 to the end,) " Look to me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have *sworn* by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear. *Surely*, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come," &c. But here this peremptory declaration, and great oath of the Most High, are delivered with such mighty solemnity to things which God did not know, if he did not certainly foresee the volitions of moral agents.

And all the predictions of Christ and his apostles, to the like purpose, must be without knowledge; as those of our Saviour comparing the Kingdom of God to a grain of mustard-seed, growing exceeding great, from a small beginning; and to leaven, hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened, &c. And the prophecies in the Epistles concerning the restoration of the nation of the Jews to the true Church of God, and the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles; and the prophecies in all the revelation concerning the glorious change in the moral state of the world of mankind, attending the destruction of Antichrist, the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and its being granted to the Church to be arrayed in that fine linen, white and clean, which is the righteousness of saints, &c.

Corollary 1.—Hence that great promise and oath of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so much celebrated in Scripture, both in the Old Testament and New

namely, "That in their seed all the nations and families of the earth should be blessed," must have been made on uncertainties, if God do not certainly foreknow the volitions of moral agents. For the fulfilment of this promise consists in that success of Christ in the work of redemption, and that setting up of his spiritual kingdom over the nations of the world, which has been spoken of. Men are blessed in Christ no otherwise than as they are brought to acknowledge him, trust in him, love and serve him, as is represented and predicted in Psalm lxxii., 11, "All Kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him;" with verse 17, "men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed." This oath to Jacob and Abraham is fulfilled in subduing men's iniquities, as is implied in that of the Prophet Micah, chap. vii., 19 and 20.

Corollary 2.—Hence also it appears, that that first Gospel-promise that ever was made to mankind, that great prediction of the salvation of the Messiah, and his victory over Satan, made to our first parents, (Gen. iii. 15.,) if there be no certain prescience of the volitions of moral agents, must have had no better foundation than conjecture. For Christ's victory over Satan consists in men being saved from sin, and in the victory of virtue and holiness over that vice and wickedness which Satan, by his temptation, has introduced, and wherein his kingdom consists.

VI.—If it be so, that God has not a prescience of the future actions of moral agents, it will follow, that the prophecies of Scripture in general are without foreknowledge. For Scripture-prophecies, almost all of them, if not universally without any exception, are either predictions of the actings and behaviours of moral agents, or of events depending on them, or some way connected with them; judicial dispensations, judgments on men for their wickedness, or rewards of virtue and righteousness, remarkable manifestations of favour to the righteous or manifestations of sovereign mercy to sinners, forgiving their iniquities, and magnifying the riches of divine grace; or dispensations of Providence, in some respect or other relating to the conduct of the subjects of God's moral government, wisely adapted thereto, either providing for what should be in a future state of things, *through the* volitions and voluntary actions of moral

agents, or consequent upon them, and regulated and ordered according to them. So that all events that are foretold are either moral events, or other events which are connected with, and accommodated to, moral events.

That the predictions of Scripture in general must be without knowledge, if God does not foresee the volitions of men, will further appear, if it be considered that almost all events belonging to the future state of the world of mankind, the changes and revolutions which come to pass in empires, kingdoms, and nations, and all societies, depend innumerable ways on the acts of men's wills—yea, on an innumerable multitude of millions of millions of volitions of mankind. Such is the state and course of things in the world of mankind, that one single event, which appears in itself exceeding inconsiderable, may in the progress and series of things, occasion a succession of the greatest and most important and extensive events; causing the state of mankind to be vastly different from what it would otherwise have been for all succeeding generations.

For instance, the coming into existence of those particular men who have been the great conquerors of the world, which, under God, have had the main hand in all the consequent state of the world, in all after-ages—such as Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander, Pompey, Julius Cæsar, &c.—undoubtedly depended on many millions of acts of the will, which followed and were occasioned one by another in their parents. And, perhaps, most of these volitions depended on millions of volitions of hundreds and thousands of others, their cotemporaries of the same generation; and most of these on millions of millions of volitions of others in preceding generations. As we go back, still the number of volitions which were some way the occasion of the event, multiply as the branches of a river, until they come at last, as it were, to an infinite number. This will not seem strange to any one who well considers the matter; if we recollect what philosophers tell us of the innumerable multitudes of those things which are, as it were, the *principia*, or *stamina vitæ*, concerned in generation—the *animalcula* in *semine masculo*, and the *ova* in the womb of the female; the impregnation, or animating of one of these, in distinction from all the rest, must depend on things infinitely minute, relating to the time

and circumstances of the act of the parents, the state of their bodies, &c., which must depend on innumerable foregoing circumstances and occurrences; which must depend, infinite ways, on foregoing acts of their wills; which are occasioned by innumerable things that happen in the course of their lives, in which their own and their neighbour's behaviour must have a hand, an infinite number of ways. And as the volitions of others must be so many ways concerned in the conception and birth of such men, so, no less, in their preservation, and circumstances of life, their particular determinations and actions, on which the great revolutions they were the occasions of depended. As, for instance, when the conspirators in Persia against the Magi were consulting about a succession to the empire, it came into the mind of one of them to propose that he whose horse neighed first, when they came together the next morning, should be king. Now, such a thing's coming into his mind might depend on innumerable incidents, wherein the volitions of mankind had been concerned. But in consequence of this accident Darius, the son of Hystaspes, was king. And if this had not been, probably his successor would not have been the same, and all the circumstances of the Persian empire might have been far otherwise. And then, perhaps, Alexander might never have conquered that empire. And then, probably, the circumstances of the world in all succeeding ages might have been vastly otherwise. I might further instance in many other occurrences, such as those on which depended Alexander's preservation, in the many critical junctures of his life, wherein a small trifle would have turned the scale against him; and the preservation and success of the Roman people in the infancy of their kingdon and commonwealth, and afterwards; which all the succeeding changes in their state, and the mighty revolutions that afterwards came to pass in the habitable world, depended upon. But these hints may be sufficient for every discerning considerate person, to convince him that the whole state of the world of mankind, in all ages, and the very being of every person who has ever lived in it, in every age, since the times of the ancient prophets, has depended on more volitions, or acts of the wills of men, than there are sands on the sea-shore.

And, therefore, unless God does most exactly and perfectly foresee the future acts of men's wills, all the

predictions which he ever uttered concerning David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander—concerning the four monarchies, and the revolutions in them—and concerning all the wars, commotions, victories, prosperities, and calamities of any of the kingdoms, nations, or communities of the world—have all been without knowledge.

So that, according to this notion of God's not foreseeing the volitions and free actions of men, God could foresee nothing pertaining to the state of the world of mankind in future ages; not so much as the being of one person that should live in it; and could foreknow no events but only such as he would bring to pass himself by the extraordinary interposition of his immediate power; or things which should come to pass in the natural material world, by the laws of motion and course of nature, wherein that is independent on the actions or works of mankind; that is, as he might, like a very able mathematician and astronomer, with great exactness calculate the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, and the greater wheels of the machine of the external creation.

And if we closely consider the matter, there will appear reason to convince us, that he could not with any absolute certainty foresee even these. As to the first, namely, things done by the immediate and extraordinary interposition of God's power, these cannot be foreseen, unless it can be foreseen when there shall be occasion for such extraordinary interposition. And that cannot be foreseen, unless the state of the moral world can be foreseen. For whenever God thus interposes, it is with regard to the state of the moral world, requiring such divine interposition. Thus God could not certainly foresee the universal deluge, the calling of Abraham, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the plagues on Egypt, and Israel's redemption out of it, the expelling the seven nations of Canaan, and the bringing Israel into that land; for these all are represented as connected with things belonging to the state of the moral world. Nor can God foreknow the most proper and convenient time of the Day of Judgement and general conflagration, for that chiefly depends on the course and state of things in the moral world.

Nor, secondly, can we on this supposition reasonably

think, that God can certainly foresee what things shall come to pass, in the course of things, in the natural and material world, even those which in an ordinary state of things might be calculated by a good astronomer. For the moral world is the end of the natural world, and the course of things in the former is undoubtedly subordinate to God's designs with respect to the latter. Therefore he has seen cause, from regard to the state of things in the moral world, extraordinarily to interpose, to interrupt and lay an arrest on, the course of things in the natural world, and even in the greater wheels of its motion; even so as to stop the sun in its course. And unless he can foresee the volitions of men, and so know something of the future state of the moral world, he cannot know but that he may still have as great occasion to interpose in this manner as ever he had; nor can he foresee how or when he shall have occasion thus to interpose.

Corollary 1.—It appears from the things which have been observed, that unless God foresees the volitions of moral agents that cannot be true which is observed by the Apostle James, (Acts xv., 18,) "Known unto God are his works, from the beginning of the world."

Corollary 2.—It appears from what has been observed, that unless God foreknows the volitions of moral agents all the prophecies of Scripture have no better foundation than mere conjecture; and that, in most instances, a conjecture which must have the utmost uncertainty, depending on an innumerable, and, as it were, infinite multitude of volitions, which are all, even to God, uncertain events; however, these prophecies are delivered as absolute predictions, and very many of them in the most positive manner, with asseverations, and some of them with the most solemn oaths.

Corollary 3.—It also follows from what has been observed, that if this notion of God's ignorance of future volitions be true, in vain did Christ say—after uttering many great and important predictions, concerning God's moral kingdom, and things depending on men's moral actions—(Mat. xxiv., 35,) "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Corollary 4.—From the same notion of God's ignorance

it would follow, that in vain has God himself often spoken of the predictions of his word, as evidences of his foreknowledge, and so as evidences of that which is his perogative as *God* and his peculiar glory, greatly distinguishing him from all other beings, as in Issi. xli., 22, 26, xliii., 9, 10, xliv., 8, xlv., 21, xlvi., 10, and xlviii., 14.

ARGUMENT II.—If God does not foreknow the volitions of moral agents, then he did not foreknow the fall of man, nor of angels, and so could not foreknow the great things which are consequent on these events—such as his sending his Son into the world to die for sinners, and all things pertaining to the great work of redemption; all the things which were done for four thousand years before Christ came, to prepare the way for it; and the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ; and the setting him at the head of the universe, as King of heaven and earth, angels and men; and the setting up his Church and Kingdom in this world, and appointing him the judge of the world; and all that Satan should do in the world in opposition to the Kingdom of Christ; and the great transactions of the Day of Judgment, that men and devils shall be the subjects of, and angels concerned in; they are all what God was ignorant of before the fall. And if so, the following Scriptures, and others like them, must be without any meaning, or contrary to truth:—Eph. i., 4, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." 1 Pet. i., 20, "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." 2 Tim. i., 9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." So, Eph. iii., 11, (speaking of the wisdom of God in the work of redemption,) "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus." Tit. i., 2, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Rom. viii., 22, "Whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate," &c. 1 Pet. i., 2, "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father."

If God did not foreknow the fall of man, nor the redemption of Jesus Christ, nor the volitions of man since the fall, then he did not foreknow the Saints in

any sense, neither as particular persons, nor as societies or nations, either by election, or mere foresight of their virtue or good works, or any foresight of anything about them relating to their salvation, or any benefit they have by Christ, or any manner of concern of their's with a Redeemer.

ARGUMENT III.—On the supposition of God's ignorance of the future volitions of free agents, it will follow that God must in many cases truly repent what he has done, so as properly to wish he had done otherwise; by reason that the event of things, in those affairs which are most important, namely, the affairs of his moral kingdom, being uncertain and contingent, often happens quite otherwise than he was aware beforehand. And there would be reason to understand that in the most literal sense, in Gen. vi., 6, "It repented the Lord, that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart;" and that, 1 Sam. xv., 11, contrary to that, Numb. xxiii., 19, "God is not the son of man, that he should repent;" and 1 Sam. xv., 29, "Also the strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent; for he is not a man that he should repent." Yea, from this notion it would follow that God is liable to repent and be grieved at his heart, in a literal sense, continually; and is always exposed to an infinite number of real disappointments in his governing the world, and to manifold, constant, great perplexity and vexation; but this is not very consistent with his title of God over all, blessed for evermore; which represents him as possessed of perfect, constant, and uninterrupted tranquillity and felicity—as God over the universe, and in his management of the affairs of the world, as supreme and universal ruler; see Rom. i., 25, ix., 5; 2 Cor. xi., 31; 1 Tim. vi., 15.

ARGUMENT IV.—It will also follow, from this notion, that as God is liable to be continually repenting what he has done, so he must be exposed to be constantly changing his mind and intentions, as to his future conduct; altering his measures, relinquishing his old designs, and forming new schemes and projections. For his purposes, even as to the main parts of his scheme—namely, such as belong to the state of his moral kingdom—must be always liable to be broken through want of foresight; and he must be continually putting his system to rights, as it gets out of order, through the con-

tingence of the actions of moral agents; he must be a being who, instead of being absolutely immutable, must necessarily be the subject of infinitely the most numerous acts of repentance and changes of intention, of any being whatsoever; for this plain reason, that his vastly extensive charge comprehends an infinitely greater number of those things which are to him contingent and uncertain. In such a situation he must have little else to do but to mend broken links as well as he can, and be rectifying his disjointed frame and disordered movements in the best manner the case will allow. The Supreme Lord of all things must needs be under great and miserable disadvantages in governing the world which he has made, and has the care of, through his being utterly unable to find out things of chief importance, which hereafter shall befall his system, which, if he did but know, he might make seasonable provision for. In many cases there may be very great necessity that he should make provision in the manner of his ordering and disposing things for some great events which are to happen, of vast and extensive influence and endless consequence to the universe, which he may see afterwards when it is too late, and may wish in vain that he had known beforehand, that he might have ordered his affairs accordingly; and it is in the power of man, on these principles, by his devices, purposes, and actions, thus to disappoint God, break his measures, make him continually change his mind, subject him to vexation, and bring him into confusion.

But how do these things consist with reason or with the Word of God? which represents that all God's works, all that he has ever to do, the whole scheme and series of his operations, are from the beginning perfectly in his view; and declares that whatever devices and designs are in the hearts of men, the counsel of the Lord is that which shall stand, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations, (Prov. xix., 21; Psal. xxxiii., 10, 11; "And that which the Lord of Hosts hath purposed, none shall disannul," (Isai. xiv., 27;) and that he cannot be frustrated in one design or thought, (Job xlii., 2;) "And that what God doth, it shall be for ever, that nothing can be put to it, or taken from it," (Eccl. iii., 14.) The stability and perpetuity of God's counsels are expressly spoken of as connected with the foreknowledge of God, (Isai. xlvi., 10,) "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that

are not yet done; saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." And how are these things consistent with what the Scripture says of God's immutability, which represents him as without variableness, or shadow of turning, and speaks of him most particularly as unchangeable with regard to his purposes, (Mal. iii., 6,) "I am the Lord; I change not; therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Exod. iii., 14, "*I am that I am.*" Job xxiii., 13, 14, "He is in one mind; and who can turn him? And what his soul desireth, even that he doth; for he performeth the thing that is appointed for me."

Argument V—If this notion of God's ignorance of the future volitions of moral agents be thoroughly considered in its consequences, it will appear to follow from it that God, after he had made the world, was liable to be wholly frustrated of his end in the creation of it; and so has been in like manner liable to be frustrated of his end in all the great works he hath wrought. It is manifest, the moral world is the end of the natural; the rest of the creation is but a house which God hath built, with furniture, for moral agents; and the good or bad state of the moral world depends on the improvement they make of their natural agency, and so depends on their volitions. And, therefore, if these cannot be foreseen by God, because they are contingent, and subject to no kind of necessity, then the affairs of the moral world are liable to go wrong, to any assignable degree; yea, liable to be utterly ruined. As on this scheme, it may well be supposed to be literally said, when mankind, by the abuse of their moral agency, became very corrupt before the flood, "that the Lord repented that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart;" so when he made the universe, he did not know but that he might be so disappointed in it, that it might grieve him at his heart that he had made it. It actually proved that all mankind became sinful, and a very great part of the angels apostatised; and how could God know beforehand that all of them would not? And how could God know but that all mankind, notwithstanding means used to reclaim them, being still left to the freedom of their own will, would continue in their apostasy, and grow worse and worse, as they of the old world before the flood did?

According to the scheme I am endeavouring to con-

fute, neither the fall of men nor angels could be fore seen, and God must be greatly disappointed in these events; and so the grand scheme and contrivance for our redemption, and destroying the works of the Devil, by the Messiah, and all the great things God has done in the prosecution of these designs, must be only the fruits of his own disappointment, and contrivances of his to mend and patch up, as well as he could, his system, which originally was all very good, and perfectly beautiful, but was marred, broken and confounded, by the free will of angels and men. And still he must be liable to be totally disappointed a second time; he could not know that he should have his desired success in the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of his only-begotten Son, and other great works accomplished to restore the state of things; he could not know, after all, whether there would actually be any tolerable measure of restoration; for this depended on the free will of man. There has been a general great apostasy of almost all the Christian world, to that which was worse than heathenism; which continued for many ages; and how could God, without foreseeing men's volitions, know whether ever Christendom would return from this apostasy? And which way could he tell beforehand how soon it would begin? The Apostle says it began to work in his time, and how could it be known how far it would proceed in that age? Yea, how could it be known that the Gospel, which was not effectual for the reformation of the Jews, would ever be effectual for the turning of the heathen nations from their heathen apostasy, which they had been confirmed in for so many ages?

It is represented often in Scripture that God who made the world for himself, and created it for his pleasure, would infallibly obtain his end in the creation, and in all his works; that as all things are of him, so they would all be to him; and that, in the final issue of things, it would appear that he is the first and the last, (Rev. xxi., 6,) "And he said unto me, it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." But these things are not consistent with God's being so liable to be disappointed in all his works, nor, indeed, with his failing of his end in any thing that he has undertaken or done.

SECTION XII.

God's Certain Foreknowledge of the Future Volitions of Moral Agents inconsistent with such a Contingence of those Volitions as is without all Necessity.

Having proved that God has a certain and infallible prescience of the acts of the will of moral agents, I come now, in the second place, to show the consequence —to show how it follows from hence that these events are necessary, with a necessity of connection or consequence.

The chief Arminian divines, so far as I have had opportunity to observe, deny this consequence, and affirm, that if such foreknowledge be allowed, it is no evidence of any necessity of the event foreknown. Now I desire that this matter may be particularly and thoroughly inquired into. I cannot but think, that on particular and full consideration, it may be perfectly determined whether it be indeed so or not.

In order to a proper consideration of this matter, I would observe the following things:—

I.—It is very evident, with regard to a thing whose existence is infallibly and indissolubly connected with something which already hath, or has had, existence, the existence of that thing is necessary. Here may be noted:—

Firstly—I observed before, in explaining the nature of necessity, that in things which are past, their past existence is now necessary; having already made sure of existence, it is too late for any possibility of alteration in that respect; it is now impossible that it should be otherwise than true that that thing has existed.

Secondly—If there be any such thing as a divine foreknowledge of the volitions of free agents, that foreknowledge, by the supposition, is a thing which already has, and long ago had, existence; and so, now its existence is necessary; it is now utterly impossible to be otherwise than that this foreknowledge should be, or *should have been.*

Thirdly—It is also very manifest that those things which are indissolubly connected with other things that are necessary, are themselves necessary. As that proposition whose truth is necessarily connected with another proposition, which is necessarily true, is itself necessarily true. To say otherwise, would be a contradiction; it would be in effect to say, that the connection was indissoluble, and yet was not so, but might be broken. If that, whose existence is indissolubly connected with something whose existence is now necessary, is itself not necessary, then it may possibly not exist, notwithstanding that indissoluble connection of its existence. Whether the absurdity be not glaring, let the reader judge.

Fourthly—It is no less evident, that if there be a full, certain, and infallible foreknowledge of the future existence of the volitions of moral agents, then there is a certain, infallible, and indissoluble connection between those events and that foreknowledge; and that, therefore, by the preceding observations, those events are necessary events, being infallibly and indissolubly connected with that whose existence already is, and so is now necessary, and cannot but have been.

To say the foreknowledge is certain and infallible, and yet the connection of the event with that foreknowledge is not indissoluble, but dissoluble and fallible, is very absurd. To affirm it would be the same thing as to affirm that there is no necessary connection between a proposition's being infallibly known to be true, and its being true indeed. So that it is perfectly demonstrable, that if there be any infallible knowledge of future volitions, the event is necessary; or, in other words, that it is impossible but the event should come to pass. For if it be not impossible but that it may be otherwise, then it is not impossible but that the proposition which affirms its future coming to pass, may not now be true; but how absurd is that, on the supposition that there is now an infallible knowledge—*i. e.* knowledge which it is impossible should fail—that it is true. There is this absurdity in it, that it is not impossible but that there now should be no truth in that proposition, which is now infallibly known to be true.

I.—That no future event can be certainly foreknown

whose existence is contingent, and without all necessity, may be proved thus—it is impossible for a thing to be certainly known to any intellect without evidence. To suppose otherwise, implies a contradiction; because for a thing to be certainly known to any understanding, is for it to be evident to that understanding; and for a thing to be evident to any understanding, is the same thing as for that understanding to see evidence of it; but no understanding, created or uncreated, can see evidence where there is none; for that is the same thing as to see that to be which is not. And, therefore, if there be any truth which is absolutely without evidence, that truth is absolutely unknowable, insomuch that it implies a contradiction to suppose that it is known.

But if there be any future event whose existence is contingent, without all necessity, the future existence of that event is absolutely without evidence. If there be any evidence of it, it must be one of these two sorts, either self-evidence, or proof, for there can be no other sort of evidence but one of these two; an evident thing must be either evident in itself, or evident in something else—that is, evident by connection with something else; but a future thing, whose existence is without all necessity, can have neither of these sorts of evidence. It cannot be self-evident, for if it be, it may be now known by what is now to be seen in the thing itself; either its present existence, or the necessity of its nature; but both these are contrary to the supposition. It is supposed both that the thing has no present existence to be seen, and also that it is not of such a nature as to be necessarily existent for the future; so that its future existence is not self-evident. And, secondly, neither is there any proof, or evidence in anything else, or evidence of connection with something else that is evident; for this also is contrary to the supposition. It is supposed that there is now nothing existent with which the future existence of the contingent, event is connected; for such a connection destroys its contingence, and supposes necessity. Thus it is demonstrated that there is in the nature of things absolutely no evidence at all of the future existence of that event, which is contingent, without all necessity (if any such event there be) neither self-evidence nor proof; and, therefore, the thing in reality is not evident, and so cannot be seen *to be evident*, or, which is the same thing, cannot be *known*.

Let us consider this in an example. Suppose that five thousand seven hundred and sixty years ago there was no other being but the Divine Being, and then this world, or some particular body or spirit, all at once starts out of nothing into being, and takes on itself a particular nature and form; all in absolute contingence, without any concern of God, or any other cause, in the matter; without any manner of ground or reason of its existence, or any dependence upon, or connection at all with, anything foregoing; I say, that if this be supposed, there was no evidence of that event beforehand. There was no evidence of it to be seen in the thing itself; for the thing itself, as yet, was not. And there was no evidence of it to be seen in anything else; for evidence in something else, is connection with something else; but such connection is contrary to the supposition. There was no evidence before that this thing would happen; for by the supposition, there was no reason why it should happen, rather than something else, or rather than nothing. And if so, then all things before were exactly equal and the same, with respect to that and other possible things; there was no preponderation, no superior weight or value, and, therefore, nothing that could be of any weight or value to determine any understanding. The thing was absolutely without evidence, and absolutely unknowable. An increase of understanding, or of the capacity of discerning, has no tendency, and makes no advance to a discerning any signs or evidences of it, let it be increased ever so much; yea, if it be increased infinitely. The increase of the strength of sight may have a tendency to enable to discern the evidence which is far off, and very much hid, and deeply involved in clouds and darkness, but it has no tendency to enable to discern evidence where there is none. If the sight be infinitely strong, and the capacity of discerning infinitely great, it will enable to see all that there is, and to see it perfectly, and with ease; yet it has no tendency at all to enable a being to discern that evidence which is not; but, on the contrary, it has a tendency to enable to discern with great certainty that there is none.

III.—To suppose the future volitions of moral agents not to be necessary events—or, which is the same thing, events which it is not impossible but that they may not come to pass—and yet to suppose that God certainly

foreknows them, and knows all things, is to suppose God's knowledge to be inconsistent with itself. For to say that God certainly, and without all conjecture, knows that a thing will infallibly be, which at the same time he knows to be so contingent that it may possibly not be, is to suppose his knowledge inconsistent with itself, or that one thing that he knows is utterly inconsistent with another thing that he knows. It is the same thing as to say, he now knows a proposition to be of certain infallible truth, which he knows to be of contingent uncertain truth. If a future volition is so without all necessity that there is nothing hinders but that it may not be, then the proposition which asserts its future existence is so uncertain, that there is nothing hinders but that the truth of it may entirely fail; and if God knows all things, he knows this proposition to be thus uncertain; and that is inconsistent with his knowing that it is infallibly true; and so inconsistent with his infallibly knowing that it is true. If the thing be indeed contingent, God views it so, and judges it to be contingent, if he views things as they are. If the event be not necessary, then it is possible it may never be; and if it be possible it may never be, God knows it may possibly never be; and that is to know that the proposition which affirms its existence may possibly not be true; and that is to know that the truth of it is uncertain; which surely is inconsistent with his knowing it as a certain truth. If volitions are in themselves contingent events, without all necessity, then it is no argument of perfection of knowledge in any being to determine peremptorily that they will be; but, on the contrary, an argument of ignorance and mistake; because it would argue, that he supposes that proposition to be certain, which in its own nature, and all things considered, is uncertain and contingent. To say in such a case, that God may have ways of knowing contingent events which we cannot conceive of, is ridiculous; as much so as to say that God may know contradictions to be true, for ought we know, or that he may know a thing to be certain, and at the same time know it not to be certain, though we cannot conceive how, because he has ways of knowing which we cannot comprehend.

Corollary 1.—From what has been observed it is *evident* that the absolute decrees of God are no more *inconsistent* with human liberty, on account of any

necessity of the event which follows from such decrees, than the absolute foreknowledge of God; because the connection between the event and certain foreknowledge is as infallible and indissoluble as between the event and an absolute decree—that is, it is no more impossible that the event and decree should not agree together, than that the event and absolute foreknowledge should disagree. The connection between the event and foreknowledge is absolutely perfect by the supposition; because it is supposed that the certainty and infallibility of the knowledge is absolutely perfect. And it being so, the certainty cannot be increased; and, therefore, the connection between the knowledge and thing known cannot be increased; so that if a decree be added to the foreknowledge, it does not at all increase the connection, or make it more infallible and indissoluble. If it were not so, the certainty of knowledge might be increased by the addition of a decree, which is contrary to the supposition, which is, that the knowledge is absolutely perfect, or perfect to the highest possible degree.*

There is as much of an impossibility but that the things which are infallibly foreknown should be, or which is the same thing as great a necessity of their future existence, as if the event were already written down, and was known and read by all mankind, through all preceeding ages, and there were the most indissoluble and perfect connection possible between the writing and the thing written. In such a case it would be as impossible the event should fail of existence, as if it had existed already; and a decree cannot make an event surer or more necessary than this.

And, therefore, if there be any such foreknowledge, as it has been proved there is, then necessity of connection and consequence is not at all inconsistent with any liberty which man, or any other creature, enjoys. And from hence it may be inferred that absolute decrees of God, which do not at all increase the necessity, are not at all inconsistent with the liberty which man enjoys, on any such account as that they make the event decreed necessary, and render it utterly impossible but that it should come to pass. Therefore, if absolute decrees are inconsistent with man's liberty as a moral agent, or his liberty in a state of probation, or any liberty whatsoever that he enjoys, it is not on account *of any necessity* which absolute decrees infer.

Dr. Whitby supposes there is a great difference between God's foreknowledge and his decrees, with regard to necessity of future events. In his Discourse on the Five Points, (p. 474, &c.,) he says, "God's prescience has no influence at all on our actions. Should God, (says he,) by immediate revelation, give me the knowledge of the event of any man's state or actions, would my knowledge of them have any influence upon his actions? Surely none at all. Our knowledge doth not affect the things we know, to make them more certain, or more future, than they would be without it. Now, foreknowledge in God is knowledge. As, therefore, knowledge has no influence on things that are, so neither has foreknowledge on things that shall be. And, consequently, the foreknowledge of any action that would be otherwise free, cannot alter or diminish that freedom. Whereas God's decree of election is powerful and active, and comprehends the preparation and exhibition of such means, as shall unfrustrably produce the end. Hence God's prescience renders no actions necessary." And to this purpose (p. 473) he cites Origen, where he says, "God's prescience is not the cause of things future, but their being future is the cause of God's prescience that they will be;" and Le Blanc, where he says, "This is the truest resolution of this difficulty, that prescience is not the cause that things are future, but their being future is the cause they are foreseen." In like manner Dr. Clark, in his Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, (pages 95, 99,) and the author of the Freedom of Will in God and the Creature, speaking to the like purpose with Dr. Whitby, represents foreknowledge as having no more influence on things known, to make them necessary, than afterknowledge, or to that purpose.

To all which I would say, that what is said about knowledge, its not having influence on the thing known to make it necessary, is nothing to the purpose, nor does it in the least affect the foregoing reasoning. Whether prescience be the thing that makes the event necessary or no, it alters not the case. Infallible foreknowledge may prove the necessity of the event foreknown, and yet not be the thing which causes the necessity. If the foreknowledge be absolute, this proves the event known *to be necessary*, or proves that it is impossible but that *the event should* be, by some means or other, either by

a decree, or some other way, if there be any other way; because, as was said before, it is absurd to say that a proposition is known to be certainly and infallibly true, which yet may possibly prove not true.

The whole of the seeming force of this evasion lies in this, that, inasmuch as certain foreknowledge does not cause an event to be necessary, as a decree does, therefore it does not prove it to be necessary, as a decree does. But there is no force in this arguing, for it is built wholly on this supposition, that nothing can prove, or be an evidence of a thing's being necessary, but that which has a causal influence to make it so; but this can never be maintained. If certain foreknowledge of the future existing of an event, be not the thing which first makes it impossible that it should fail of existence, yet it may, and certainly does, demonstrate that it is impossible it should fail of it, however that impossibility comes. If foreknowledge be not the cause, but the effect of this impossibility, it may prove that there is such an impossibility as much as if it were the cause. It is as strong arguing from the effect to the cause, as from the cause to the effect. It is enough that an existence which is infallibly foreknown cannot fail, whether that impossibility arises from the foreknowledge, or is prior to it. It is as evident, as it is possible any thing should be, that it is impossible a thing which is infallibly known to be true, should prove not to be true; therefore, there is a necessity that it should be otherwise, whether the knowledge be the cause of this necessity, or the necessity the cause of the knowledge.

All certain knowledge, whether it be foreknowledge or after-knowledge, or concomitant knowledge, proves the thing known now to be necessary, by some means or other, or proves that it is impossible it should now be otherwise than true. I freely allow that foreknowledge does not prove a thing to be necessary any more than after-knowledge; but then, after-knowledge, which is certain and infallible, proves that it is now become impossible but that the proposition known should be true. Certain after-knowledge proves that it is now, in the time of the knowledge, by some means or other, become impossible but that the proposition which predicates past existence on the event should be true. And so does certain foreknowledge prove, that now, in the

time of the knowledge, it is, by some means or other, become impossible but that the proposition which predicates future existence on the event should be true. The necessity of the truth of the propositions consisting in the present impossibility of the non-existence of the event affirmed, in both cases, is the immediate ground of the certainty of the knowledge; there can be no certainty of knowledge without it.

There must be a certainty in things themselves before they are certainly known, or, which is the same thing, known to be certain. For certainty of knowledge is nothing else but knowing or discerning the certainty there is in the things themselves which are known. Therefore, there must be a certainty in things to be a ground of certainty of knowledge, and to render things capable of being known to be certain. And this is nothing but the necessity of the truth known, or its being impossible but that it should be true; or, in other words, the firm and infallible connection between the subject and predicate of the proposition that contains that truth. All certainty of knowledge consists in the view of the firmness of that connection. So God's certain foreknowledge of the future existence of any event, is his view of the firm and indissoluble connection of the subject and predicate of the proposition that affirms its future existence. The subject is that possible event; the predicate is its future existing; but if future existence be firmly and indissolubly connected with that event, then the future existence of that event is necessary. If God certainly knows the future existence of an event which is wholly contingent, and may possibly never be, then he sees a firm connection between a subject and predicate that are not firmly connected, which is a contradiction.

I allow what Dr. Whitby says to be true, "That mere knowledge does not affect the thing known, to make it more certain or more future." But yet, I say, it supposes and proves the thing to be already both future and certain—*i.e.*, necessarily future. Knowledge of futurity, supposes futurity; and a certain knowledge of futurity, supposes certain futurity antecedent to that certain knowledge. But there is no other certain futurity of a thing, antecedent to certainty of knowledge, *than a prior* impossibility but that the thing should

prove true; or, which is the same thing, the necessity of the event.

I would observe one thing further concerning this matter, and it is this—that if it be as those forementioned writers suppose, that God's foreknowledge is not the cause, but the effect of the existence of the event foreknown, this is so far from showing that this foreknowledge does not infer the necessity of the existence of that event, that it rather shows the contrary the more plainly; because it shows the existence of the event to be so settled and firm, that it is as if it had already been, inasmuch as in effect it actually exists already, its future existence has already had actual influence and efficiency. and has produced an effect, namely, prescience; the effect exists already; and as the effect supposes the cause, is connected with the cause, and depends entirely upon it, therefore it is as if the future event, which is the cause, had existed already. The effect is as firm as possible, it having already the possession of existence, and so having made sure of it. But the effect cannot be more firm and stable than its cause, ground, and reason. The building cannot be firmer than the foundation.

To illustrate this matter, let us suppose the appearances and images of things in a glass, for instance, a reflecting telescope, to be the real effects of heavenly bodies—at a distance, and out of sight—which they resemble; if it be so, then, as these images in the telescope have had a past actual existence, and it is become utterly impossible now that it should be otherwise than that they have existed, so they being the true effects of the heavenly bodies they resemble, this proves the existing of those heavenly bodies to be as real, infallible, firm, and necessary, as the existing of these effects; the one being connected with, and wholly depending on, the other. Now, let us suppose future existences, some way or other, to have influence back, to produce effects beforehand, and cause exact and perfect images of themselves in a glass, a thousand years before they exist, yea, in all preceding ages; but yet that these images are real effects of these future existences, perfectly dependent on, and connected with them as their cause; these effects and images, having already had actual existence, rendering that matter of their existing perfectly firm

and stable, and utterly impossible to be otherwise; this proves in like manner, as in the other instance, that the existence of the things which are their causes, is also equally sure, firm, and necessary; and that it is alike impossible but that they should be, as if they had been already, as their effects have. And if, instead of images in a glass, we suppose the antecedent effects to be perfect ideas of them in the divine mind, which have existed there from all eternity, which are as properly effects, as truly and properly connected with their cause, the case is not altered.

Another thing which has been said by some Arminians, to take off the force of what is urged from God's prescience, against the contingence of the volitions of moral agents, is to this purpose:—"That when we talk of foreknowledge in God, there is no strict propriety in our so speaking; and that although it be true that there is in God the most perfect knowledge of all events from eternity to eternity, yet there is no such thing as before and after in God, but he sees all things by one perfect unchangeable view, without any succession." To this I answer—

It has been already shown that all certain knowledge proves the necessity of the truth known, whether it be before, after, or at the same time. Though it be true that there is no succession in God's knowledge, and the manner of his knowledge is to us inconceivable, yet thus much we know concerning it, that there is no event, past, present, or to come, that God is ever uncertain of; he never is, never was, and never will be without infallible knowledge of it; he always sees the existence of it to be certain and infallible. And as he always sees things just as they are in truth, hence there never is in reality any thing contingent in such a sense as that possibly it may happen never to exist. If, strictly speaking, there is no foreknowledge in God, it is because those things which are future to us, are as present to God as if they already had existence; and that is as much as to say, that future events are always in God's view as evident, clear, sure, and necessary, as if they already were. If there never is a time wherein the existence of the event is not present with God, then there never is a time wherein it is not as much impossible for it to fail of existence, as if its existence were present, and were already come to pass.

God's viewing things so perfectly and unchangeably as that there is no succession in his ideas or judgment, does not hinder but that there is properly now, in the mind of God, a certain and perfect knowledge of the moral actions of men, which are to us a hundred years hence; yea, the objection supposes this, and, therefore, it certainly does not hinder but that, by the foregoing arguments, it is now impossible these moral actions should not come to pass.

We know that God knows the future voluntary actions of men in such a sense beforehand as that he is able particularly to declare and foretell them, and write them, or cause them to be written, down in a book, as he often has done; and that, therefore, the necessary connection which there is between God's knowledge and the event known does as much prove the event to be necessary beforehand, as if the divine knowledge were in the same sense before the event, as the prediction or writing is. If the knowledge be infallible, then the expression of it in the written prediction is infallible—that is, there is an infallible connection between that written prediction and the event. And if so, then it is impossible it should ever be otherwise than that that prediction should agree; and this is the same thing as to say, it is impossible but that the event should come to pass; and this is the same as to say that its coming to pass is necessary. So that it is manifest that there being no proper succession in God's mind, makes no alteration as to the necessity of the existence of the events which God knows.

Yea, this is so far from weakening the proof which has been given of the impossibility of the not coming to pass of future events known, as that it establishes that wherein the strength of the foregoing arguments consists, and shows the clearness of the evidence. For the very reason why God's knowledge is without succession is because it is absolutely perfect, to the highest possible degree of clearness and certainty; all things, whether past, present, or to come, being viewed with equal evidence and fullness; future things being seen with as much clearness as if they were present; the view is always in absolute perfection; and absolute constant perfection admits of no alteration, and so no succession; the actual existence of the thing known, does not at all

increase, or add to the clearness or certainty of the thing known; God calls the things that are not, as though they were; they are all one to him as if they had already existed. But herein consists the strength of the demonstration before given, of the impossibility of the not existing of those things whose existence God knows; that it is as impossible they should fail of existence as if they existed already. This objection, instead of weakening this argument, sets it in the clearest and strongest light; for it supposes it to be so, indeed, that the existence of future events is in God's view so much as if it already had been, that when they come actually to exist, it makes not the least alteration or variation in his view or knowledge of them.

The objection is founded on the immutability of God's knowledge; for it is the immutability of knowledge makes his knowledge to be without succession. But this most directly and plainly demonstrates the thing I insist on, namely, that it it utterly impossible the known events should fail of existence. For if that were possible, then it would be possible for there to be a change in God's knowledge and view of things. For if the known event should fail of existence, and not come into being, as God expected, then God would see it, and so would change his mind, and see his former mistake; and thus there would be a change and succession in his knowledge. But as God is immutable, and so it is utterly and infinitely impossible that his view should be changed, so it is, for the same reason, just so impossible that the foreknown event should not exist; and that is to be impossible in the highest degree; and, therefore, the contrary is necessary. Nothing is more impossible than that the immutable God should be changed by the succession of time—who comprehends all things, from eternity to eternity, in one, most perfect, and unalterable view—so that his whole eternal duration is *vitæ interminabilis, tota, simul, et perfecta possessio*

On the whole, I need not fear to say, that there is no geometrical theorem, or proposition whatsoever, more capable of strict demonstration, than that God's certain prescience of the volitions of moral agents is inconsistent with such a contingence of these events as is without all necessity; and so is inconsistent with the Arminian *notion of liberty.*

Corollary 1.—Hence the doctrine of the Calvinists, concerning the absolute decrees of God, does not at all infer any more fatality in things, than will demonstrably follow from the doctrine of most Arminian divines, who acknowledge God's omniscience, and universal prescience. Therefore, all objections they make against the doctrine of the Calvinists, as implying Hobbes's doctrine of necessity, or the stoical doctrine of fate, lie no more against the doctrine of Calvinists, than their own doctrine; and, therefore, it does not become those divines to raise such an outcry against the Calvinists on this account.

Corollary 2.— Hence all arguing from necessity, against the doctrine of the inability of unregenerate men to perform the conditions of salvation, and the commands of God requiring spiritual duties, and against the Calvinistic doctrine of efficacious grace; I say, all arguings of Arminians—such of them as own God's omniscience—against these things, on this ground, that these doctrines, though they do not suppose men to be under any constraint or coaction, yet suppose them under necessity, with respect to their moral actions, and those things which are required of them in order to their acceptance with God, and their arguing against the necessity of men's volitions, taken from the reasonableness of God's commands, promises, and threatenings, and the sincerity of his counsels and invitations—and all objections against any doctrines of the Calvinists as being inconsistent with human liberty, because they infer necessity—I say, all these arguments and objections must fall to the ground, and be justly esteemed vain and frivolous, as coming from them; being maintained in an inconsistence with themselves, and in like manner levelled against their own doctrine, as against the doctrine of the Calvinists.

SECTION XIII.

Whether we suppose the Volitions of Moral Agents to be connected with anything Antecedent or not, yet they must be Necessary in such a Sense as to Overthrow Arminian Liberty.

Every act of the will has a cause, or it has not. If it has a cause, then, according to what has already been demonstrated, it is not contingent, but necessary, the effect being necessarily dependent and consequent on its cause, and that let the cause be what it will. If the cause is the will itself, by antecedent acts choosing and determining, still the determined and caused act must be a necessary effect. The act that is the determined effect of the foregoing act which is its cause, cannot prevent the efficiency of its cause, but must be wholly subject to its determination and command, as much as the motions of the hands and feet. The consequent commanded acts of the will are as passive and as necessary, with respect to the antecedent determining acts, as the parts of the body are to the volitions which determine and command them. And, therefore, if all the free acts of the will are thus, if they are all determined effects, determined by the will itself, that is, determined by antecedent choice, then they are all necessary, they are all subject to, and decisively fixed by the foregoing act, which is their cause; yea, even the determining act itself, for that must be determined and fixed by another act preceding that, if it be a free and voluntary act, and so must be necessary. So that by this all the free acts of the will are necessary, and cannot be free unless they are necessary; because they cannot be free, according to the Arminian notion of freedom, unless they are determined by the will, which is to be determined by antecedent choice; which being their cause, proves them necessary; and yet they say, necessity is utterly inconsistent with liberty. So that by their scheme, the acts of the will cannot be free unless they are necessary, and yet cannot be free if they be necessary.

But if the other part of the dilemma be taken, and it be affirmed that the free acts of the will have no *cause, and* are connected with nothing whatsoever that

goes before them and determines them, in order to maintain their proper and absolute contingence, and this should be allowed to be possible, still it will not serve their turn. For if the volition comes to pass by perfect contingence, and without any cause at all, then it is certain no act of the will, no prior act of the soul, was the cause, no determination or choice of the soul had any hand in it. The will, or the soul, was, indeed, the subject of what happened to it accidentally, but was not the cause. The will is not active in causing or determining, but purely the passive subject, at least according to their notion of action and passion. In this case, contingence does as much prevent the determination of the will, as a proper cause; and as to the will, it was necessary, and could be no otherwise. For to suppose that it could have been otherwise, if the will or soul had pleased, is to suppose that the act is dependent on some prior act of choice or pleasure, contrary to what is now supposed; it is to suppose that it might have been otherwise, if its cause had made it or ordered it otherwise. But this does not agree to its having no cause or orderer at all. That must be necessary as to the soul, which is dependent on no free act of the soul; but that which is without a cause, is dependent on no free act of the soul; because, by the supposition, it is dependent on nothing, and is connected with nothing. In such a case, the soul is necessarily subjected to what accident brings to pass, from time to time, as much as the earth, that is inactive, is necessarily subjected to what falls upon it. But this does not consist with the Arminian notion of liberty, which is the will's power of determining itself in its own acts, and being wholly active in it, without passiveness, and without being subject to necessity. Thus, contingence belongs to the Arminian notion of liberty, and yet is inconsistent with it.

I would here observe that the author of the Essay on the Freedom of Will in God and the Creature, (pages 76, 77,) says as follows:—"The word chance always means something done without design. Chance and design stand in direct opposition to each other; and chance can never be properly applied to the acts of the will, which is the spring of all design, and which designs to choose whatever it doth choose, whether there be any superior fitness in the thing which it chooses or no; and

it designs to determine itself to one thing—where two things perfectly equal are proposed—merely because it will." But herein appears a very great inadvertence in this author; for if the will be the spring of all design, as he says, then certainly it is not always the effect of design, and the acts of the will themselves must sometimes come to pass when they do not spring from design, and, consequently, come to pass by chance, according to his own definition of chance. And if the will designs to choose whatsoever it does choose, and designs to determine itself, as he says, then it designs to determine all its designs; which carries us back from one design to a foregoing design determining that, and to another determining that—and so on *in infinitum*. The very first design must be the effect of foregoing design, or else it must be by chance, in his notion of it.

Here another alternative may be proposed, relating to the connection of the acts of the will with something foregoing that is their cause, not much unlike to the other, which is this—either human liberty is such that it may well stand with volitions being necessarily connected with the views of the understanding, and so is consistent with necessity, or, it is inconsistent with, and contrary to, such a connection and necessity. The former is directly subversive of the Arminian notion of liberty, consisting in freedom from all necessity; and if the latter be chosen, and it be said that liberty is inconsistent with any such necessary connection of volition with foregoing views of the understanding, it consisting in freedom from any such necessity of the will as that would imply, then the liberty of the soul consists, in part at least, in the freedom from restraint, limitation, and government in its actings by the understanding, and in liberty and liableness to act contrary to the understanding's views and dictates; and, consequently, the more the soul has of this disengagedness in its acting, the more liberty. Now, let it be considered what this brings the noble principle of human liberty to, particularly, when it is possessed and enjoyed in its perfection, namely, a full and perfect freedom and liableness to act altogether at random, without the least connection with, or restraint or government by, any dictate of reason, or anything whatsoever apprehended, considered, or viewed by the understanding, as being inconsistent with the *full and perfect* sovereignty of the will over its own de-

terminations. The notion mankind have conceived of liberty is some dignity or privilege—something worth claiming; but what dignity or privilege is there in being given up to such a wild contingence as this, to be perfectly and constantly liable to act unintelligently and unreasonably, and as much without the guidance of understanding as if we had none, or were as destitute of perception as the smoke that is driven by the wind.

PART III.

WHEREIN IS INQUIRED WHETHER ANY SUCH LIBERTY OF WILL AS ARMINIANS HOLD BE NECESSARY TO MORAL AGENCY, VIRTUE AND VICE, PRAISE AND DISPRAISE, &c.

SECTION I.

GOD'S MORAL EXCELLENCY NECESSARY, YET VIRTUOUS AND PRAISEWORTHY.

HAVING considered the first thing that was proposed to be inquired into, relating to that freedom of will which Arminians maintain, namely, whether any such thing does, ever did, or ever can exist, or be conceived of, I come now to the second thing proposed to be the sub-subject of inquiry, namely, whether any such kind of liberty be requisite to moral agency, virtue and vice, praise and blame, reward and punishment, &c.

I shall begin with some consideration of the virtue and agency of the supreme moral agent, and fountain of all agency and virtue.

Dr. Whitby, in his Discourse on the Five Points, (page 14,) says, "If all human actions are necessary, virtue and vice must be empty names; we being capable of nothing that is blame-worthy, or deserveth praise; for who could blame a person for doing only what he could not help, or judge that he deserveth praise only for what he could not avoid?" To the like purpose he speaks in places innumerable, especially in his Discourse on the Freedom of the Will; constantly maintaining, that a freedom not only from coaction, but

necessity, is absolutely requisite, in order to actions being either worthy of blame, or deserving of praise. And to this agrees, as is well known, the current doctrine of Arminian writers, who in general hold, that there is no virtue or vice, reward or punishment, nothing to be commended or blamed, without this freedom. And yet Dr. Whitby, (page 300,) allows that God is without this freedom; and Arminians, so far as I have had opportunity to observe, generally acknowledge that God is necessarily holy, and his will necessarily determined to that which is good.

So that, putting these things together, the infinitely holy God, who always used to be esteemed by God's people not only virtuous, but a being in whom is all possible virtue, and every virtue in the most absolute purity and perfection, and in infinitely greater brightness and amiableness than in any creature—the most perfect pattern of virtue, and the fountain from whom all others virtue is but as beams from the sun, and who has been supposed to be, on the account of his virtue and holiness, infinitely more worthy to be esteemed, loved, honoured, admired, commended, extolled, and praised, than any creature—and he who is thus everywhere represented in Scripture, I say, this being, according to this notion of Dr. Whitby, and other Arminians, has no virtue at all; virtue, when ascribed to him, is but an empty name, and he is deserving of no commendation or praise, because he is under necessity. He cannot avoid being holy and good as he is, therefore no thanks to him for it. It seems the holiness, justice, faithfulness, &c., of the Most High must not be accounted to be of the nature of that which is virtuous and praise-worthy. They will not deny that these things in God are good, but then we must understand them that they are no more virtuous, or of the nature of any thing commendable, than the good that is in any other being that is not a moral agent—as the brightness of the sun, and the fertility of the earth are good, but not virtuous, because these properties are necessary to these bodies, and not the fruit of self-determining power.

There needs no other confutation of this notion of God's not being virtuous or praiseworthy, to Christians acquainted with the Bible, but only stating and particularly representing of it. To bring texts of Scripture,

wherein God is represented as in every respect, in the highest manner virtuous, and supremely praiseworthy, would be endless, and is altogether needless to such as have been brought up under the light of the Gospel.

It were to be wished that Dr. Whitby, and other divines of the same sort, had explained themselves when they asserted that that which is necessary, is not deserving of praise, at the same time that they have owned God's perfection to be necessary, and so, in effect, represented God as not deserving praise. Certainly, if their words have any meaning at all, by praise they must mean the exercise or testimony of some sort of esteem, respect, or honourable regard. And will they then say that men are worthy of that esteem, respect, and honour for their virtue, small and imperfect as it is, which yet God is not worthy of, for his infinite righteousness, holiness, and goodness? If so, it must be because of some sort of peculiar excellency in the virtuous man, which is the prerogative, wherein he really has the preference; some dignity, that is entirely distinguished from any excellency, amiableness, or honourableness in God; not in imperfection and dependance, but in pre-eminence; which, therefore, he does not receive from God, nor is God the fountain or pattern of it; nor can God, in that respect, stand in competition with him, as the object of honour and regard; but man may claim a peculiar esteem, commendation, and glory, that God can have no pretension to. Yea, God has no right, by virtue of his necessary holiness, to intermeddle with that grateful respect and praise due to the virtuous man, who chooses virtue, in the exercise of a freedom *ad utrumque*, any more than a precious stone, which cannot avoid being hard and beautiful.

And if it be so, let it be explained what that peculiar respect is, that is due to the virtuous man, which differs in nature and kind, in some way of pre-eminence, from all that is due to God. What is the name or description of that peculiar affection? Is it esteem, love, admiration, honour, praise, or gratitude? The Scripture every where represents God as the highest object of all these; there we read of the soul's magnifying the Lord, of loving him with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind and with all the strength; admiring him, and his

righteous acts, or greatly regarding them, as marvellous and wonderful; honouring, glorifying, exalting, extolling, blessing, thanking, and praising him; giving unto him all the glory of the good which is done or received, rather than unto men; that no flesh should glory in his presence, but that he should be regarded as the being to whom all glory is due. What then is that respect? What passion, affection, or exercise is it that Arminians call praise, diverse from all these things, which men are worthy of for their virtue, and which God is not worthy of in any degree?

If that necessity which attends God's moral perfections and actions be as inconsistent with a being worthy of praise, as a necessity of coaction—as is plainly implied in or inferred from Dr. Whitby's discourse—then why should we thank God for his goodness, any more than if he were forced to be good, or any more than we should thank one of our fellow-creatures who did us good, not freely, and of good will, or from any kindness of heart, but from mere compulsion, or extrinsical necessity? Arminians suppose that God is necessarily a good and gracious being; for this they make the ground of some of their main arguments against many doctrines maintained by Calvinists; they say, these are certainly false, and it is impossible they should be true, because they are not consistent with the goodness of God. This supposes, that it is impossible but that God should be good; for if it be possible that he should be otherwise, then that impossibility of the truth of these doctrines ceases, according to their own argument.

That virtue in God is not, in the most proper sense, rewardable, is not for want of merit in his moral perfections and actions, sufficient to deserve rewards from his creatures, but because he is infinitely above all capacity of receiving any reward or benefit from the creature; he is already infinitely and unchangeably happy, and we cannot be profitable unto him. But still he is worthy of our supreme benevolence for his virtue, and would be worthy of our beneficence, which is the fruit and expression of benevolence, if our goodness could extend to him. If God deserves to be thanked and praised for his goodness, he would, for the same reason, deserve that we should also requite his kindness, if that were

possible. "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?" is the natural language of thankfulness; and so far as in us lies, it is our duty to recompense God's goodness, and render again according to benefits received. And that we might have opportunity for so natural an expression of our gratitude to God, as beneficence, notwithstanding his being infinitely above our reach, he has appointed others to be his receivers, and to stand in his stead, as the objects of our beneficence, such are especially our indigent brethren.

SECTION II.

The Acts of the Will of the Human Soul of Jesus Christ necessarily Holy, yet truly Virtuous, Praiseworthy, Rewardable, &c.

I have already considered how Dr. Whitby insists upon it that a freedom, not only from co-action, but necessity, is requisite either to virtue or vice, praise or dispraise, reward or punishment. He also insists on the same freedom as absolutely requisite to a person's being the subject of a law of precepts or prohibitions, in the book before mentioned, (pages 301, 314, 328, 339, 340, 341, 342, 347, 361, 373, 410;) and of promises and threatenings, (pages 298, 301, 305, 311, 339, 340, 363;) and as requisite to a state of trial, (page 297, &c.)

Now, therefore, with an eye to these things, I would inquire into the moral conduct and practice of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he exhibited in his human nature here, in his state of humiliation. And, firstly, I would show, that his holy behaviour was necessary, or that it was impossible it should be otherwise than that he should behave himself holily, and that he should be perfectly holy in each individual act of his life. And, secondly, that his holy behaviour was properly of the nature of virtue, and was worthy of praise, and that he was the subject of law, precepts or commands, promises and rewards; and that he was in a state of trial.

I.—It was impossible that the acts of the will of the human soul of Christ should, in any instance, degree, or circumstance, be otherwise than holy and agreeable to

God's nature and will. The following things make this evident:—

Firstly—God had promised so effectually to preserve and uphold him by his Spirit, under all his temptations, that he should not fail of reaching the end for which he came into the world; which he would have failed of had he fallen into sin. We have such a promise, Isai. xlii., 1, 2, 3, 4, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold: mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles: he shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law." This promise of Christ's having God's Spirit put upon him, and his not crying and lifting up his voice, &c., relates to the time of Christ's appearance on earth; as is manifest from the nature of the promise, and also the application of it in the New Testament, (Matt. xii., 18.) And the words imply a promise of his being so upheld by God's Spirit, that he should be preserved from sin; particularly from pride and vain-glory, and from being overcome by any of the temptations he should be under to affect the glory of this world; the pomp of an earthly prince, or the applause and praise of men; and that he should be so upheld, that he should by no means fail of obtaining the end of his coming into the world, of bringing forth judgment unto victory, and establishing his kingdom of grace in the earth. And in the following verses, this promise is confirmed, with the greatest imaginable solemnity:—"Thus saith the LORD, HE that made the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. I am JEHOVAH, that is my name," &c.

Very parallel with these promises is that, Isai. xlix., 7, 8, 9, which also has an apparent respect to the time of

Christ's humiliation on earth—"Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One; to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. Thus saith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee; in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth," &c.

And in Isai. l., 5, 9, we have the Messiah expressing his assurance that God would help him, by so opening his ear, or inclining his heart to God's commandments, that he should not be rebellious, but should persevere and not apostatize, or turn his back; that through God's help, he should be immoveable, in a way of obedience, under the great trials of reproach and suffering he should meet with; setting his face like a flint; so that he knew he should not be ashamed, or frustrated in his design; and, finally, should be approved and justified, as having done his work faithfully:—"The Lord hath opened mine ear; and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back: I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face as a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? Let us stand together. Who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me: who is he that shall condemn me? Lo, they shall all wax old as a garment, the moth shall eat them up."

Secondly—The same thing is evident from all the promises which God made to the Messiah, of his future glory, kingdom, and success, in his office and character of a mediator; which glory could not have been obtained if his holiness had failed, and he had been guilty of sin. God's absolute promise of any things makes the things promised necessary, and their failing to take place absolutely impossible; and, in like manner, it makes those things necessary on which the things promised depend, and without which they cannot take effect; therefore, it appears that it was utterly impossible that Christ's holi-

ness should fail from such absolute promises as those, (Psal. cx., 4,) "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek;" and from every other promise in that Psalm, contained in each verse of it; and Psal. ii., 7, 8, "I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee; ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance," &c.; Psal. xlv., 3, 4, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty; and in thy majesty ride prosperously," &c.; and so everything that is said from thence to the end of the Psalm. And those promises, Isai. lii., 13, 14, 15, and liii., 10, 11, 12; and all those promises which God makes to the Messiah, of success, dominion, and glory in the character of Redeemer, in Isai. xlix.

Thirdly—It was often promised to the Church of God of old, for their comfort, that God would give them a righteous, sinless Saviour; (Jer. xxiii., 5, 6,) "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days shall Judah be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." So Jer. xxxiii., 15, "I will cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land." Isai. ix., 6, 7, "For unto us a child is born; upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice, from henceforth even for ever: the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this." Chap. xi., at the beginning, "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. The spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity. Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." Chap. lii., 13, "My servant shall deal prudently." Chap. liii., 9, "Because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." If it be impossible that these promises should fail, and it be easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one jot or tittle of these promises of God to pass away, then it was impossible that Christ should commit any

sin. Christ himself signified that it was impossible but that the things which were spoken concerning him should be fulfilled, (Luke xxiv., 44,) "That all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me; (Matt. xxvi., 54,) "But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Mark xiv., 49,) "But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." And so the Apostle, (Acts i., 16,) "This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled."

Fourthly—All the promises which were made to the Church of old of the Messiah as a future Saviour—from that made to our first parents in Paradise, to that which was delivered by the Prophet Malachi—show it to be impossible that Christ should not have persevered in perfect holiness. The ancient predictions given to God's Church, of the Messiah as a Saviour, were of the nature of promises, as is evident by the predictions themselves, and the manner of delivering them. But they are expressly and very often called promises in the New Testament; as in Luke i., 54, 55, 72, 73; Acts xiii., 32, 33; Rom. i., 1, 2. 3, and xv., 8; Heb. vi., 13, &c. These promises were often made with great solemnity, and confirmed with an oath, as in Gen. xxii., 16, 17, 18, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Compare Luke i., 72, 73, and Gal. iii., 8, 15, 16.) The Apostle, in Heb. vi., 17, 18, speaking of this promise to Abraham, says, "Wherein God willing more abundantly to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel confirmed it by an oath; that by two *immutable* things, in which it was *impossible* for God to lie, he might have strong consolation;" in which words, the necessity of the accomplishment, or, which is the same thing, the impossibility of the contrary is fully declared. So God confirmed the promise of the great salvation of the Messiah, made to David, by an oath, (Psal. lxxxix., 3, 4,) "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations." There is nothing that *is so* abundantly set forth in Scripture as sure and irrefragable as this promise and oath to David; (see Psal.

lxxxix., 34, 35, 36; 2 Sam. xxiii., 5; Isai. lv., 3; Acts ii., 29, 30, and xiii., 34.) The Scripture expressly speaks of it as utterly impossible that this promise and oath to David, concerning the everlasting dominion of the Messiah of his seed, should fail, (Jer. xxxiii., 15, &c.,) "In those days and at that time I will cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David. For thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the House of Israel;" (ver. 20, 21,) "If ye can break my covenant of the day and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne." So in ver. 25, 26. Thus abundant is the Scripture in representing how impossible it was that the promises made of old, concerning the great salvation and kingdom of the Messiah, should fail; which implies that it was impossible that this Messiah, the second Adam, the promised seed of Abraham and of David, should fall from his integrity as the first Adam did.

Fifthly—All the promises that were made to the Church of God under the Old Testament, of the great enlargement of the Church, and advancement of her glory, in the days of the Gospel, after the coming of the Messiah—the increase of her light, liberty, holiness, joy, triumph over her enemies, &c., of which so great a part of the Old Testament consists—which are repeated so often, are so variously exhibited, so frequently introduced with great pomp and solemnity, and are so abundantly sealed with typical and symbolical representations—I say, all these promises imply, that the Messiah should perfect the work of redemption; and this implies, that he should persevere in the work which the Father had appointed him, being in all things conformed to his will. These promises were often confirmed by an oath, (see Isai. liv., 9, with the context; chap. xlii., 8.) And it is represented as utterly impossible that these promises should fail, (Isai. xlix., 15, with the context; chap. liv., 10, with the context; chap. li. 4, 8; chap xl., 8, with the context.) And, therefore, it was impossible that the Messiah should fail, or commit sin.

Sixthly—It was impossible that the Messiah should fail of *persevering* in integrity and holiness, as the first

Adam did, because this would have been inconsistent with the promises which God made to the blessed Virgin, his mother, and to her husband; implying, that "he should save his people from their sins," that "God would give him the throne of his father David," that "he should reign over the house of Jacob for ever;" and that "of his kingdom there should be no end." These promises were sure, and it was impossible they should fail; and, therefore, the Virgin Mary, in trusting fully to them, acted reasonably, having an immoveable foundation of her faith; as Elizabeth observes, (Luke i., 45,) "And blessed is she that believeth; for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."

Seventhly—That it should have been possible that Christ should sin, and so fail in the work of our redemption, does not consist with the eternal purpose and decree of God, revealed in the Scriptures, that he would provide salvation for fallen man in and by Jesus Christ, and that salvation should be offered to sinners through the preaching of the Gospel. Such an absolute decree as this Arminians do not deny. Thus much, at least (out of all controversy), is implied in such Scriptures as 1 Cor. ii., 7; Eph. i., 4, 5, and chap. iii., 9, 10, 11; 1 Pet. i., 19, 20. Such an absolute decree as this Arminians allow to be signified in these texts. And the Arminians' election of nation and societies, and general election of the Christian Church, and conditional election of particular persons, imply this. God could not decree before the foundation of the world, to save all that should believe in, and obey Christ, unless he had absolutely decreed that salvation should be provided, and effectually wrought out by Christ. And since—as the Arminians themselves strenuously maintain—a decree of God infers necessity, hence it became necessary that Christ should persevere, and actually work out salvation for us, and that he should not fail by the commission of sin.

Eighthly—That it should have been possible for Christ's holiness to fail is not consistent with what God promised to his Son, before all ages. For that salvation, should be offered to men through Christ, and bestowed on all his faithful followers, is what is, at least, implied in that certain and infallible promise spoken of by the

Apostle, (Tit. i., 2,) "In hope of eternal life; which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." This does not seem to be controverted by Arminians.*

Ninthly—That it should be possible for Christ to fail of doing his Father's will, is inconsistent with the promise made to the Father by the Son, by the *Logos* that was with the Father from the beginning, before he took the human nature; as may be seen in Psal. xl., 6, 7, 8, compared with the Apostle's interpretation, Heb. x., 5, 9, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened (or bored); burnt-offering and sin-offering thou hast not required. Then said I, lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God, and thy law is within my heart." Where is a manifest allusion to the covenant which the willing servant, who loveth his master's service, made with his master, to be his servant for ever, on the day wherein he had his ear bored; which covenant was probably inserted in the public records, called the Volume of the Book, by the Judges, who were called to take cognizance of the transaction, (Exod. xxi.) If the *Logos*, who was with the Father before the world, and who made the world, thus engaged in covenant to do the will of the Father in the human nature, and the promise was, as it were, recorded, that it might be made sure, doubtless it was impossible that it should fail; and so it was impossible that Christ should fail of doing the will of the Father in the human nature.

Tenthly—If it was possible for Christ to have failed of doing the will of his Father, and so to have failed of effectually working out redemption for sinners, then the salvation of all the saints, who were saved from the beginning of the world to the death of Christ, was not built on a firm foundation. The Messiah, and the redemption which he was to work out by his obedience unto death, was the foundation of the salvation of all the posterity of fallen man, that ever were saved. Therefore, if when the Old Testament Saints had the pardon of their sins and the favour of God promised them, and salvation bestowed upon them, it was still possible that the Messiah, when he came, might commit sin, then all this was on a foundation that was not firm

* See Dr. Whitby on the Five Points, pages 48, 49, 50.

and stable, but liable to fail—something which it was possible might never be. God did, as it were, trust to what his Son had engaged and promised to do in future time; and depended so much upon it, that he proceeded actually to save men on the account of it, as though it had been already done. But this trust and dependance of God, on the supposition of Christ's being liable to fail of doing his will, was leaning on a staff that was weak, and might possibly break. The Saints of old trusted to the promises of a future redemption to be wrought out and completed by the Messiah, and built their comfort upon it; Abraham saw Christ's day and rejoiced; and he and the other Patriarchs died in the faith of the promise of it, (Heb. xi., 13.) But on this supposition, their faith, and their comfort, and their salvation, was built on a moveable fallible foundation; Christ was not to them a tried stone, a sure foundation, as in Isai. xxviii., 16. David entirely rested on the covenant of God with him, concerning the future glorious dominion and salvation of the Messiah, of his seed, says, it was "all his salvation, and all his desire;" and comforts himself that this covenant was an "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure," (2 Sam. xxiii., 5.) But if Christ's virtue might fail, he was mistaken; his great comfort was not built so sure as he thought it was, being founded entirely on the determinations of the free-will of Christ's human soul; which was subject to no necessity, and might be determined either one way or the other. Also the dependance of those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem, and waited for the consolation of Israel, (Luke ii., 25, 38,) and the confidence of the disciples of Jesus, who forsook all and followed him, that they might enjoy the benefits of his future kingdom, were built on a sandy foundation.

Eleventhly—The man Christ Jesus, before he had finished his course of obedience, and while in the midst of temptations and trials, was abundant in positively predicting his own future glory in his kingdom, and the enlargement of his Church, the salvation of the Gentiles through him, &c., and in promises of blessings he would bestow on his true disciples in his future kingdom, on which promises he required the full dependance of his disciples, (John xiv.) But the disciples would have no ground for such dependance if Christ had been liable to fail in his work; and Christ himself would have been

guilty of presumption in so abounding in peremptory promises of great things, which depended on a mere contingence, namely, the determinations of his free will, consisting in a freedom *ad utrumque* to either sin or holiness, standing in indifference and incident, in thousands of future instances, to go either one way or the other.

Thus it is evident that it was impossible that the acts of the will of the human soul of Christ should be otherwise than holy, and conformed to the will of the Father, or, in other words, they were necessarily so conformed.

I have been the longer in the proof of this matter, it being a thing denied by some of the greatest Arminians, by Episcopius in particular; and because I look upon it as a point clearly and absolutely determining the controversy between Calvinists and Arminians, concerning the necessity of such a freedom of will as is insisted on by the latter, in order to moral agency, virtue, command or prohibition, promise or threatening, reward or punishment, praise or dispraise, merit or demerit. I now, therefore, proceed—

II.—To consider whether Christ, in his holy behaviour on earth, was not thus a moral agent, subject to commands, promises, &c.

Dr. Whitby very often speaks of what he calls a freedom *ad utrumlibet*, without necessity, as requisite to law and commands, and speaks of necessity as entirely inconsistent with injunctions and prohibitions. But yet we read of Christ's being the subject of the commands of his Father, (John x., 18, and xv., 10.) And Christ tells us that everything that he said or did was in compliance with commandments he had received of the Father, (John xii., 49, 50, and xiv., 31.) And we often read of Christ's obedience to his Father's commands, (Rom. v., 19; Phil. ii., 8; Heb. v., 8.)

The forementioned writer represents promises offered as motives to persons to do their duty, or a being moved and induced by promises, as utterly inconsistent with a state wherein persons have not a liberty *ad utrumlibet*, but are necessarily determined to one, (see particularly pages

298 and 311.) But the thing which this writer asserts is demonstrably false if the Christian religion be true. If there be any truth in Christianity or the Holy Scriptures, the man Christ Jesus had his will infallibly, unalterably, and unfrustrably determined to good, and that alone, but yet he had promises of glorious rewards made to him, on condition of his persevering in, and perfecting the work which God had appointed him, (Isai. liii., 10, 11, 12; Psal. ii. and cx.; Isai. xlix., 7, 8, 9.) In Luke xxii., 28, 29, Christ says to his disciples, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." The word most properly signifies to appoint by covenant or promise. The plain meaning of Christ's words is this—"As you have partaken of my temptations and trials, and have been steadfast, and have overcome, I promise to make you partakers of my reward, and to give you a kingdom, as the Father has promised me a kingdom, for continuing steadfast and overcoming in those trials." And the words are well explained by those in Rev. iii., 21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." And Christ had not only promises of glorious success and rewards made to his obedience and sufferings, but the Scriptures plainly represent him as using these promises for motives and inducements to obey and suffer, and particularly that promise of a kingdom which the Father had appointed him, or sitting with the Father on his throne; as in Heb. xii., 1, 2, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

And how strange would it be to hear any Christian assert that the holy and excellent temper and behaviour of Jesus Christ, and that obedience which he performed under such great trials, was not virtuous or praiseworthy, because his will was not free *ad utrumque* to either holiness or sin, but was unalterably determined to one; that upon this account, there is no virtue at all, in all Christ's humility, meekness, patience, charity, forgiveness of enemies, contempt of the world, heavenly-

mindedness, submission to the will of God, perfect obedience to his commands—though he was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross—his great compassion to the afflicted, his unparalleled love to mankind, his faithfulness to God and man, under such great trials, his praying for his enemies, even when nailing him to the cross; that virtue, when applied to these things, is but an empty name; that there was no merit in any of these things; that is, that Christ was worthy of nothing at all on the account of them, worthy of no reward, no praise, no honour or respect from God or man, because his will was not indifferent, and free either to these things, or the contrary, but under such a strong inclination or bias to the things that were excellent, as made it impossible that he should choose the contrary; that upon this account (to use Dr. Whitby's language) it would be sensibly unreasonable that the human nature should be rewarded for any of these things.

According to this doctrine, that creature who is evidently set forth in Scripture as the first-born of every creature, as having in all things the pre-eminence, and as the highest of all creatures in virtue, honour, and worthiness of esteem, praise, and glory, on the account of his virtue, is less worthy of reward or praise than the very least of Saints; yea, no more worthy than a clock, or mere machine, that is purely passive, and moved by natural necessity.

If we judge by Scriptural representations of things, we have reason to suppose that Christ took on him our nature, and dwelt with us in this world, in a suffering state, not only to satisfy for our sins, but that he, being in our nature and circumstances, and under our trials, might be our most fit and proper example, leader, and captain, in the exercise of glorious and victorious virtue, and might be a visible instance of the glorious end and reward of it; that we might see in him the beauty, amiableness, and true honour and glory, and exceeding benefit of that virtue, which it is proper for us human beings to practise; and might thereby learn, and be animated, to seek the like glory and honour, and to obtain the like glorious reward. (See Heb. ii., 9, 14, with v., 8, 9, and xii., 1, 2, 3; John xv., 10; Rom. viii., 17; 2 Tim. ii., 11, 12; 1 Pet. ii., 19, 20, 21, and iv., 13.) But if there was nothing of any virtue or merit, or

worthiness of any reward, glory, praise, or commendation at all, in all that he did, because it was all necessary, and he could not help it, then how is there anything so proper to animate and incite us, free creatures, by patient continuance in well-doing, to seek for honour, glory, and immortality?

God speaks of himself as peculiarly well-pleased with the righteousness of this servant of his, (Isai. xlii., 21,) "The Lord is well-pleased for his righteousness sake." The sacrifices of old are spoken of as a sweet savour to God, but the obedience of Christ as far more acceptable than they, (Psal. xl., 6, 7,) "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: mine ear hast thou opened," as thy servant performing willing obedience; "Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required: then said I, lo, I come," as a servant that cheerfully answers the calls of his master; "I delight to do thy will, O my God, and thy law is within mine heart." Matt. xvii., 5, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." And Christ tells us expressly that the Father loves him for that wonderful instance of his obedience, his voluntarily yielding himself to death, in compliance with the Father's command, (Joh. x., 17, 18,) "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life. No man taketh it from me; but I lay it down of myself; this commandment received I of my Father."

And if there was no merit in Christ's obedience unto death, if it was not worthy of praise and of the most glorious rewards, the heavenly hosts were exceedingly mistaken, by the account that is given of them, in Rev. v., 8, 12, "The four beasts and the four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials, full of odours. And they sung a new song, saying, thou art *worthy* to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, *worthy* is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

Christ speaks of the eternal life which he was to

receive, as the reward of his obedience to the Father's commandments, (Joh. xii., 49, 50,) "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak; and I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." God promises to divide him a portion with the great, &c., for his being his righteous servant, for his glorious virtue under such great trials and sufferings, (Isai. liii., 11, 12,) "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death." The Scriptures represent God as rewarding him far above all his other servants, (Phil. ii., 7, 8, 9,) "He took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name." (Psal xlv., 7,) "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

There is no room to pretend that the glorious benefits bestowed in consequence of Christ's obedience are not properly of the nature of a reward. What is a reward, in the most proper sense, but a benefit bestowed in consequence of something morally excellent in quality or behaviour, in testimony of well-pleasedness in that moral excellency, and respect and favour on that account? If we consider the nature of a reward most strictly, and make the utmost of it, and add to the things contained in this description proper merit or worthiness, and the bestowment of the benefit in consequence of a promise, still it will be found that there is nothing belonging to it, but the Scripture is most express as to its belonging to the glory bestowed on Christ, after his sufferings, as appears from what has been already observed; there was a glorious benefit bestowed in consequence of something morally excellent, being called righteousness and obedience; there was great favour, love, and well-pleasedness, for this righteousness and obedience, in the

bestower; there was proper merit, or worthiness of the benefit, in the obedience; it was bestowed in fulfilment of promises made to that obedience, and was bestowed therefore, or because he had performed that obedience.

I may add to all these things, that Jesus Christ, while here in the flesh, was manifestly in a state of trial. The last Adam, as Christ is called, (Rom. v. 14; 1 Cor. xv., 45,) taking on him the human nature, and so the form of a servant, and being under the law, to stand and act for us, was put into a state of trial, as the first Adam was. Dr. Whitby mentions these three things as evidences of persons being in a state of trial, (On the Five Points, pages 298, 299,) namely, their afflictions being spoken of as their trials or temptations, their being the subjects of promises, and their being exposed to Satan's temptations. But Christ was apparently the subject of each of these. Concerning promises made to him, I have spoken already. The difficulties and afflictions he met with in the course of his obedience, are called his temptations, or trials, (Luke xxii., 28,) "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations or trials;" (Heb. ii., 18,) "For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, or tried, he is able to succour them that are tempted;" and (chap. iv., 15,) "We have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." And as to his being tempted by Satan, it is what none will dispute.

SECTION III.

The case of such as are given up of God to Sin, and of Fallen Man in general, proves Moral Necessity and Inability to be Consistent with Blame-worthiness.

Dr. Whitby asserts freedom, not only from coaction, but necessity, to be essential to anything deserving the name of sin, and to an action's being culpable, in these words, (Discourse on Five Points, Edit. 3, page 348,) "If they be thus necessitated, then neither their sins of omission or commission could deserve that name, it *being essential* to the nature of sin, according to St.

Austin's definition, that it be an action, *a quo liberum est abstinere.* Three things seem plainly necessary to make an action or omission culpable; Firstly, that it be in our power to perform or forbear it; for as Origen and all the Fathers say, no man is blame-worthy for not doing what he could not do." And elsewhere the doctor insists that "When any do evil of necessity, what they do is no vice, that they are guilty of no fault,* are worthy of no blame, dispraise,† or dishonour,‡ but are unblameable."§

If these things are true, in Dr. Whitby's sense of necessity, they will prove all such to be blameless who are given up of God to sin, in what they commit after they are thus given up. That there is such a thing as men's being judicially given up to sin, is certain, if the Scripture rightly informs us, such a thing being often there spoken of; as in Psalm lxxxi., 12, "So I gave them up to their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels;" Act, vii., 42, "Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven;" Rom. i., 24, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves;" ver. 26, "For this cause God gave them up to vile affections;" ver. 28, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things that are not convenient."

It is needless to stand particularly to inquire what God's "giving men up to their own hearts' lusts" signifies; it is sufficient to observe that hereby is certainly meant God's so ordering or disposing things, in some respect or other, either by doing or forbearing to do, as that the consequence should be men's continuing in their sins. So much as men are given up to, so much is the consequence of their being given up, whether that be less or more. If God does not order things so, by action or permission, that sin will be the consequence, then the event proves that they are not given up to that consequence. If good be the consequence, instead of evil, then God's mercy is to be acknowledged in that good; which mercy must be contrary to God's judgment in giving up to evil. If the event must prove that they

* Discourse on Five Points, pages 347, 360, 363, 377. † Ibid. 303, 326, 329, and many other places. ‡ Ibid. 371. § Ibid 304, 361.

are given up to evil as the consequence, then the persons who are the subjects of this judgment, must be the subjects of such an event, and so the event is necessary.

If not only coaction, but all necessity, will prove men blameless, then Judas was blameless, after Christ had given him over, and had already declared his certain damnation, and that he should verily betray him, He was guilty of no sin in betraying his master, on this supposition, though his so doing is spoken of by Christ as the most aggravated sin—more heinous than the sin of Pilate in crucifying him. And the Jews in Egypt, in Jeremiah's time, were guilty of no sin, in their not worshipping the true God, after God had "sworn by his great name, that his name should be no more named in the mouth of any man of Judah, in all the land of Egypt, (Jer. xliv., 26.)

Dr. Whitby (Discourse on the Five Points, pages 302, 303,) denies that men in this world are ever so given up by God to sin that their wills should be necessarily determined to evil; though he owns, that hereby it may become exceeding difficult for men to do good, having a strong bent and powerful inclination to what is evil. But if we should allow the case to be just as he represents, the judgment of giving up to sin will no better agree with his notions of that liberty, which is essential to praise or blame, than if we should suppose it to render the avoiding of sin impossible. For if an impossibility of avoiding sin wholly excuse a man, then, for the same reason, its being difficult to avoid it, excuses him in part, and this just in proportion to the degree of difficulty. If the influence of moral inpossibility or inability be the same to excuse persons in not doing, or not avoiding anything, as that of natural inability, which is supposed, then undoubtedly, in like manner, moral difficulty has the same influence to excuse with natural difficulty. But all allow that natural impossibility wholly excuses, and also that natural difficulty excuses in part, and makes the act or omission less blameable in proportion to the difficulty. All natural difficulty, according to the plainest dictates of the light of nature, excuses in some degree, so that the neglect is not so blameable as if there had been no difficulty in the case; and so the greater the difficulty is, still the more excusable in proportion to the increase

of the difficulty. And as natural impossibility wholly excuses and excludes all blame, so the nearer the difficulty approaches to impossibility, still the nearer a person is to blamelessness in proportion to that approach. And if the case of moral impossibility or necessity be just the same with natural necessity or coaction, as to influence to excuse a neglect, then also, for the same reason, the case of natural difficulty does not differ in influence to excuse a neglect from moral difficulty, arising from a strong bias or bent to evil, such as Dr. Whitby owns in the case of those that are given up to their own hearts' lusts; so that the fault of such persons must be lessened in proportion to the difficulty and approach to impossibility. If ten degrees of moral difficulty make the action quite impossible, and so wholly excuse, then, if there be nine degrees of difficulty, the person is in great part excused, and in nine degrees in ten less blameworthy than if there had been no difficulty at all, and he has but one degree of blameworthiness. The reason is plain, on Arminian principles, namely, because as difficulty, by antecedent bent and bias on the will, is increased, liberty of indifference and self-determination in the will is diminished; so much hindrance and impediment is there in the way of the will's acting freely by mere self determination. And if ten degrees of such hindrance take away all such liberty, then nine degrees take away nine parts in ten, and leave but one degree of liberty. And, therefore, there is but one degree of blameableness, *cæteris paribus*, in the neglect, the man being no further blameable in what he does or neglects than he has liberty in that affair; for blame or praise, they say, arises wholly from a good use or abuse of liberty.

From all which it follows that a strong bent and bias one way, and difficulty of going the contrary, never causes a person to be at all more exposed to sin, or anything blameable, because as the difficulty is increased, so much the less is required and expected. Though, in one respect, exposedness to sin or fault is increased, namely, by an increase of exposedness to the evil action or omission; yet it is diminished in another respect, to balance it, namely, as the sinfulness or blameableness of the action or omission is diminished in the same proportion. So that, on the whole, the affair, as to exposedness to guilt or blame, is left just as it was.

To illustrate this, let us suppose a scale of a balance to be intelligent, and a free agent, and endued with a self-moving power, by virtue of which it could act and produce effects to a certain degree—*e. g.*, to move itself up or down with a force equal to a weight of ten pounds; and that it might, therefore, be required of it in ordinary circumstances to move itself down with that force, for which it has power and full liberty, and, therefore, would be blameworthy if it failed of it. But then let us suppose a weight of ten pounds to be put in the opposite scale, which in force entirely counter-balances its self-moving power, and so renders it impossible for it to move down at all; this, therefore, wholly excuses it from any such motion. But if we suppose there to be only nine pounds in the opposite scale, this renders its motion not impossible, but yet more difficult, so that it can now only move down with the force of one pound; but, however, this is all that is required of it under these circumstances; it is wholly excused from nine parts of its motion. And if the scale, under these circumstances, neglects to move, and remains at rest, all that it will be blamed for will be its neglect of that one tenth part of its motion, which it had as much liberty and advantage for, as in usual circumstances it has for the greater motion, which in such a case would be required. So that this new difficulty, does not at all increase its exposedness to anything blameworthy.

And thus the very supposition of difficulty in the way of a man's duty, or proclivity to sin, through a being given up to hardness of heart, or, indeed, by any other means whatsoever, is an inconsistence, according to Dr. Whitby's notions of liberty, virtue and vice, blame and praise. The avoiding sin and blame, and the doing what is virtuous and praiseworthy, must be always equally easy.

Dr. Whitby's notions of liberty, obligation, virtue, sin, &c., led him into another great inconsistence. He abundantly insists that necessity is inconsistent with the nature of sin or fault. He says in the forementioned treatise, page 14, "Who can blame a person for doing what he could not help?" and page 15, "It being sensibly unjust to punish any man for doing that which *it was never* in his power to avoid;" and in page 341, *to confirm his* opinion, he quotes one of the Fathers,

saying, "Why doth God command, if man hath not free-will and power to obey?" And again in the same and the next page, "Who will not cry out that it is folly to command him that hath not liberty to do what is commanded; and that it is unjust to condemn him that has it not in his power to do what is required?" And in page 373 he cites another saying, "A law is given to him that can turn to both parts—*i. e.*, obey or transgress it; but no law can be against him who is bound by nature."

And yet the same Dr. Whitby asserts that fallen man is not able to perform perfect obedience. In page 165 he has these words, "The nature of Adam had power to continue innocent and without sin, whereas it is certain, our nature never had so." But if we have not power to continue innocent and without sin, then sin is consistent with necessity, and we may be sinful in that which we have not power to avoid, and those things cannot be true which he asserts elsewhere, namely, "That if we be necessitated, neither sins of omission nor commission would deserve that name," (page 348.) If we have it not in our power to be innocent, then we have it not in our power to be blameless; and if so, we are under a necessity of being blameworthy. And how does this consist with what he so often asserts, that necessity is inconsistent with blame or praise? If we have it not in our power to perform perfect obedience to all the commands of God, then we are under a necessity of breaking some commands, in some degree, having no power to perform so much as is commanded. And if so, why does he cry out of the unreasonableness and folly of commanding beyond what men have power to do?

And Arminians in general are very inconsistent with themselves in what they say of the inability of fallen man in this respect. They strenuously maintain that it would be unjust in God to require anything of us beyond our present power and ability to perform, and also hold that we are now unable to perform perfect obedience, and that Christ died to satisfy for the imperfections of our obedience, and has made way that our imperfect obedience might be accepted instead of perfect; wherein they seem insensibly to run themselves into the grossest inconsistence. For, as I have observed *elsewhere*, "They hold that God, in mercy to

mankind, has abolished that rigorous constitution or law that they were under originally, and instead of it, has introduced a more mild constitution, and put us under a new law, which requires no more than imperfect sincere obedience, in compliance with our poor infirm impotent circumstances since the fall."

Now, how can these things be made consistent? I would ask what law these imperfections of our obedience are a breach of? If they are a breach of no law that we were ever under, then they are not sins. And if they be not sins, what need of Christ's dying to satisfy for them? But if they are sins, and the breach of some law, what law is it? They cannot be a breach of their new law, for that requires no other than imperfect obedience, or obedience with imperfections; and, therefore, to have obedience attended with imperfections, is no breach of it, for it is as much as it requires. And they cannot be a breach of their old law, for that, they say, is entirely abolished, and we never were under it. They say it would not be just in God to require of us perfect obedience, because it would not be just to require more than we can perform, or to punish us for failing of it; and, therefore, by their own scheme, the imperfections of our obedience does not deserve to be punished. What need, therefore, of Christ's dying to satisfy for them? What need of his suffering to satisfy for that which is no fault, and in its own nature deserves no suffering? What need of Christ's dying to purchase that our imperfect obedience should be accepted, when, according to their scheme, it would be unjust in itself that any other obedience than imperfect should be required? What need of Christ's dying to make way for God's accepting such an obedience as it would be unjust in him not to accept? Is there any need of Christ's dying, to prevail with God not to do unrighteously? If it be said that Christ died to satisfy that old law for us, that so we might not be under it, but that there might be room for our being under a more mild law, still, I would inquire what need of Christ's dying that we might not be under a law which, by their principles, it would be in itself unjust that we should be under, whether Christ had died or no, because in our present state we are not able to keep it?

So the Arminians are inconsistent with themselves,

not only in what they say of the need of Christ's satisfaction to atone for those imperfections which we cannot avoid, but also in what they say of the grace of God granted to enable men to perform the sincere obedience of the new law. "I grant, (says Dr. Stebbing,*) indeed, that by reason of original sin, we are utterly disabled for the performance of the condition, without new grace from God. But I say, then, that he gives such grace to all of us, by which the performance of the condition is truly possible; and upon this ground he may, and doth, most righteously require it." If Dr. Stebbing intends to speak properly, by grace he must mean that assistance which is of grace, or of free favour and kindness. But yet, in the same place, he speaks of it as very unreasonable, unjust, and cruel for God to require that, as the condition of pardon, that is become impossible by original sin. If it be so, what grace is there in giving assistance and ability to peform the condition of pardon? Or why is that called by the name of grace that is an absolute debt, which God is bound to bestow, and which it would be unjust and cruel in him to withold, seeing he requires that, as the condition of pardon, which we cannot perform without it.

SECTION IV.

Command and Obligation to Obedience consistent with Moral Inability to obey.

It being so much insisted on by Arminian writers that necessity is inconsistent with law or command, and particularly that it is absurd to suppose God by his command should require that of men which they are unable to do—not allowing in this case for any difference that there is between natural and moral inability—I would, therefore, now particularly consider this matter.

And for the greater clearness, I would distinctly lay down the following things:—

I.—The will itself, and not only those actions which are the effects of the will, is the proper object of precept

* Treatise of the Operations of the Spirit. 2 Edit., pages 112, 113.

or command. That is, such or such a state or acts of men's wills is in many cases properly required of them by command, and not only those alterations in the state of their bodies or minds that are the consequences of volition. This is most manifest, for it is the soul only that is properly and directly the subject of precepts or commands; that only being capable of receiving or perceiving commands. The motions or state of the body are matter of command only as they are subject to the soul, and connected with its acts. But now the soul has no other faculty whereby it can, in the most direct and proper sense, consent, yield to, or comply with, any command but the faculty of the will; and it is by this faculty only, that the soul can directly disobey, or refuse compliance: for the very notions of consenting, yielding, accepting, complying, refusing, rejecting, &c., are, according to the meaning of the terms, nothing but certain acts of the will. Obedience, in the primary nature of it, is the submitting and yielding of the will of one to the will of another. Disobedience is the not consenting, not complying of the will of the commanded, to the manifested will of the commander. Other acts that are not the acts of the will, as certain motions of the body and alterations in the soul, are obedience or disobedience only indirectly, as they are connected with the state or acts of the will, according to an established law of nature. So that it is manifest the will itself may be required; and the being of a good will is the most proper, direct, and immediate subject of command; and if this cannot be prescribed or required by command or precept, nothing can, for other things can be required no otherwise than as they depend upon, and are the fruits of, a good will.

Corollary 1.—If there be several acts of the will, or a series of acts, one following another, and one the effect of another, the first and determining act is properly the subject of command, and not only the consequent acts, which are dependant upon it. Yea, it is this more especially which is that which command or precept has a proper respect to, because it is this act that determines the whole affair; in this act the obedience or disobedience lies, in a peculiar manner, the consequent acts being all subject to it, and governed and determined by *it. This* determinining governing act must be the proper *subject of* precept, or none.

Corollary 2.—It also follows from what has been observed, that if there be any sort of act, or exertion of the soul, prior to all free acts of the will or acts of choice in the case, directing and determining what the acts of the will shall be, that act or exertion of the soul cannot properly be subject to any command or precept, in any respect whatsoever, either directly or indirectly, immediately or remotely. Such acts cannot be subject to commands directly, because they are no acts of the will, being by the supposition prior to all acts of the will, determining and giving rise to all its acts; they not being acts of the will, there can be in them no consent to, or compliance with, any command. Neither can they be subject to command or precept indirectly or remotely, for they are not so much as the effects or consequences of the will, being prior to all its acts. So that if there be any obedience in that original act of the soul, determining all volitions, it is an act of obedience wherein the will has no concern at all, it preceding every act of will. And, therefore, if the soul either obeys or disobeys in this act, it is wholly involuntarily; there is no willing obedience or rebellion, no compliance or opposition of the will in the affair; and what sort of obedience or rebellion is this!

And thus the Arminian notion of the freedom of the will, consisting in the soul's determining its own acts of will, instead of being essential to moral agency, and to men's being the subjects of moral government, is utterly inconsistent with it. For if the soul determines all its acts of the will, it is therein subject to no command or moral government, as has been now observed, because its original determining act is no act of will or choice, it being prior, by the supposition, to every act of will. And the soul cannot be the subject of command in the act of the will, itself, which depends on the foregoing determining act, and is determined by it, inasmuch as this is necessary, being the necessary consequence and effect of that prior determining act, which is not voluntary. Nor can the man be the subject of command or government in his external actions, because these are all necessary, being the necessary effects of the acts of the will themselves. So that mankind, according to this scheme, are subjects of command or moral government in nothing at all; and all their moral agency is entirely excluded, and no room left for virtue or vice in the world.

So that it is the Arminian scheme, and not the scheme of the Calvinists, that is utterly inconsistent with moral government, and with all use of laws, precepts, prohibitions, promises, or threatenings. Neither is there any way whatsoever to make their principles consist with these things. For if it be said, that there is no prior determining act of the soul, preceding the acts of the will, but that volitions are events that come to pass by pure accident, without any determining cause, this is most palpably inconsistent with all use of laws and precepts, for nothing is more plain than that laws can be of no use to direct and regulate perfect accident; which by the supposition of its being pure accident, is in no case regulated by any thing preceding, but happens this way or that, perfectly by chance, without any cause or rule. The perfect uselessness of laws and precepts also follows from the Arminian notion of indifference, as essential to that liberty which is requisite to virtue or vice. For the end of laws is to bind to one side, and the end of commands is to turn the will one way; and, therefore, they are of no use unless they turn or bias the will that way. But if liberty consists in indifference, then their biassing the will one way only destroys liberty, as it puts the will out of equilibrium. So that the will, having a bias, through the influence of binding law, laid upon it, is not wholly left to itself, to determine itself which way it will, without influence from without.

II.—Having shown that the will itself, especially in those acts which are original, leading and determining in any case, is the proper subject of precept and command, and not only those alterations in the body, &c., which are the effects of the will, I now proceed, in the second place, to observe that the very opposition or defect of the will itself, in that act which is its original and determining act in the case, I say the will's opposition in this act to a thing proposed or commanded, or its failing of compliance, implies a moral inability to that thing; or, in other words, whenever a command requires a certain state or act of the will, and the person commanded, notwithstanding the command and the circumstances under which it is exhibited, still finds his will opposite, or wanting, in that belonging to its state or acts which is original and determining in the affair, that man is morally unable to obey that command.

This is manifest from what was observed in the first part, concerning the nature of moral inability, as distinguished from natural; where it was observed that a man may then be said to be morally unable to do a thing when he is under the influence or prevalence of a contrary inclination, or has a want of inclination under such circumstances and views. It is also evident from what has been before proved, that the will is always, and in every individual act, necessarily determined by the strongest motive, and so is always unable to go against the motive which, all things considered, has now the greatest strength and advantage to move the will. But not further to insist on these things, the truth of the position now laid down—namely, that when the will is opposite to, or failing of a compliance with, a thing in its original determining inclination or act, it is not able to comply—appears by the consideration of these two things:—

Firstly—The will in the time of that diverse or opposite leading act or inclination, and when actually under the influence of it, is not able to exert itself to the contrary, to make an alteration, in order to a compliance. The inclination is unable to change itself, and that for this plain reason, that it is unable to incline to change itself. Present choice cannot at present choose to be otherwise; for that would be at present to choose something diverse from what is at present chosen. If the will, all things now considered, inclines or chooses to go that way, then it cannot choose, all things now considered, to go the other way, and so cannot choose to be made to go the other way. To suppose that the mind is now sincerely inclined to change itself to a different inclination, is to suppose the mind is now truly inclined otherwise than it is now inclined. The will may oppose some future remote act that it is exposed to, but not its own present act.

Secondly—As it is impossible that the will should comply with the thing commanded with respect to its leading act, by any act of its own, in the time of that diverse or opposite leading and original act, or after it is actually come under the influence of that determining choice or inclination, so it is impossible it should be determined to a compliance by any foregoing act, for by the very supposition there is no foregoing act;

the opposite or non-complying act being that act which is original and determining in the case. Therefore, it must be so, that if this first determining act be found non-complying, on the proposal of the command, the mind is morally unable to obey. For to suppose it to be able to obey is to suppose it to be able to determine and cause its first determining act to be otherwise, and that it has power better to govern and regulate its first governing and regulating act, which is absurd, for it is to suppose a prior act of the will, determining its first determining act—that is, an act prior to the first, and leading and governing the original and governing act of all; which is a contradiction.

Here if it should be said, that although the mind has not any ability to will contrary to what it does will, in the original and leading act of the will, because there is supposed to be no prior act to determine and order it otherwise, and the will cannot immediately change itself, because it cannot at present incline to a change, yet the mind has an ability for the present to forbear to proceed to action, and to take time for deliberation, which may be an occasion of the change of the inclination; I answer, firstly, in this objection that seems to be forgotten which was observed before, namely, that the determining to take the matter into consideration is itself an act of the will; and if this be all the act wherein the mind exercises ability and freedom, then this, by the supposition, must be all that can be commanded or required by precept. And if this act be the commanded act, then all that has been observed concerning the commanded act of the will remains true, that the very want of it is a moral inability to exert it, &c. Secondly—We are speaking concerning the first and leading act of the will in the case, or about the affair; and if a determining to deliberate, or, on the contrary, to proceed immediately without deliberating, be the first and leading act, or whether it be or no, if there be another act before it which determines that, or whatever be the original and leading act, still, the foregoing proof stands good, that the non-compliance of the leading act implies moral inability to comply.

If it should be objected that these things make all moral inability equal, and suppose men morally unable to will otherwise than they actually do will, in all cases,

and equally so in every instance; in answer to this objection, I desire two things may be observed. Firstly—That if by being equally unable be meant as really unable, then so far as the inability is merely moral, it is true the will, in every instance, acts by moral necessity, and is morally unable to act otherwise, as truly and properly in one case as another; as I humbly conceive has been perfectly and abundantly demonstrated by what has been said in the preceding part of this essay. But yet in some respect the inability may be said to be greater in some instances than others; though the man may be truly unable—if moral inability can truly be called inability—yet he may be further from being able to do somethings than others. As it is in things which men are naturally unable to do. A person whose strength is no more than sufficient to lift the weight of one hundred pounds, is as truly and really unable to lift one hundred and one pounds as ten thousand pounds: but yet he is further from being able to lift the latter weight than the former; and so, according to common use of speech, has a greater inability for it. So it is in moral inability. A man is truly morally unable to choose contrary to a present inclination, which in the least degree prevails, or contrary to that motive which, all things considered, has strength and advantage now to move the will in the least degree, superior to all other motives in view; but yet he is further from ability to resist a very strong habit, and a violent and deeply-rooted inclination, or a motive vastly exceeding all others in strength. And, again, the inability may in some respects be called greater in some instances than others, as it may be more general and extensive to all acts of that kind. So men may be said to be unable in a different sense, and to be further from moral ability, who have that moral inability which is general and habitual, than they who have only that inability which is occasional and particular.* Thus in cases of natural inability, he that is born blind may be said to be unable to see in a different manner, and is in some respects further from being able to see, than he whose sight is hindered by a transient cloud or mist.

And, besides, that which was observed in the first part of this discourse concerning the inability which attends a strong and settled habit, should be here

* See this Distinction of Moral Inability explained in Part I., Section iv.

remembered, namely, that fixed habit is attended with this peculiar moral inability, by which it is distinguished from occasional volition, namely, that endeavours to avoid future volitions of that kind, which are agreeable to such a habit, much more frequently and commonly prove vain and insufficient. For though it is impossible there should be any true sincere desires and endeavours against a present volition or choice, yet there may be against volitions of that kind, when viewed at a distance. A person may desire and use means to prevent future exercises of a certain inclination, and, in order to it, may wish the habit might be removed; but his desires and endeavours may be ineffectual. The man may be said in some sense to be unable, yea, even as the word unable is a relative term, and has relation to ineffectual endeavours, yet not with regard to present, but remote endeavours.

Secondly—It must be borne in mind, according to what was observed before, that, indeed, no inability whatsoever which is merely moral is properly called by the name of inability; and that, in the strictest propriety of speech, a man may be said to have a thing in his power if he has it at his election; and he cannot be said to be unable to do a thing when he can do it now if he pleases, or whenever he has a proper, direct, and immediate desire for it. As to those desires and endeavours that may be against the exercises of a strong habit, with regard to which men may be said to be unable to avoid those exercises, they are remote desires and endeavours in two respects. Firstly, as to time, they are never against present volitions but only against volitions of such a kind, when viewed at a distance; secondly, as to their nature, these opposite desires are not directly and properly against the habit and inclination itself, or the volitions in which it is exercised, for these, in themselves considered, are agreeable, but against something else, that attends them, or is their consequence; the opposition of the mind is levelled entirely against this; the inclination or volitions themselves are not at all opposed directly, and for their own sake, but only indirectly, and remotely on the account of something alien and foreign.

III.—Though the opposition of the will itself, or the very want of will to a thing commanded, implies a moral

inability to that thing, yet, if it be as has been already shown, that the being of a good state or act of will is a thing most properly required by command, then, in some cases, such a state or act of will may properly be required, which at present is not, and which may also be wanting after it is commanded; and, therefore, those things may properly be commanded which men have a moral inability for.

Such a state or act of the will may be required by command as does not already exist. For if that volition only may be commanded to be which already is, there could be no use of precept; commands in all cases would be perfectly vain and impertinent. And not only may such a will be required as is wanting before the command is given, but also such as may possibly be wanting afterwards; such as the exhibition of the command may not be effectual to produce or excite. Otherwise, no such thing as disobedience to a proper and rightful command is possible in any case; and there is no case supposable, or possible, wherein there can be an inexcusable or faulty disobedience. Which Arminians cannot affirm, consistently with their principles; for this makes obedience to just and proper commands always necessary, and disobedience impossible. And so the Arminian would overthrow himself, yielding the very point we are upon, which he so strenuously denies, namely, that law and command are consistent with necessity.

If merely that inability will excuse disobedience which is implied in the opposition or defect of inclination, remaining after the command is exhibited, then wickedness always carries that in it which excuses it. It is evermore so, that by how much the more wickedness there is in a man's heart, by so much is his inclination to evil the stronger, and by so much the more, therefore, has he of moral inability to the good required. His moral inability, consisting in the strength of his evil inclination, is the very thing wherein his wickedness consists, and yet, according to Arminian principles, it must be a thing inconsistent with wickedness; and by how much the more he has of it, by so much is he the further from wickedness.

Therefore, on the whole, it is manifest, that moral

inability alone, which consists in disinclination, never renders any thing improperly the subject-matter of precept or command, and never can excuse any person in disobedience, or want of conformity to a command.

Natural inability, arising from the want of natural capacity or external hindrance—which alone is properly called inability—without doubt wholly excuses or makes a thing improperly the matter of command. If men are excused from doing or acting any good thing supposed to be commanded, it must be through some defect or obstacle that is not in the will itself, but extrinsic to it—either in the capacity of understanding, or body, or outward circumstances.

Here two or three things may be observed; firstly, as to spiritual duties or acts, or any good thing in the state or immanent acts of the will itself, or of the affections, which are only certain modes of the exercise of the will, if persons are justly excused, it must be through want of capacity in the natural faculty of understanding. Thus the same spiritual duties, or holy affections and exercises of heart, cannot be required of men as may be of angels, the capacity of understanding being so much inferior. So men cannot be required to love those amiable persons whom they have had no opportunity to see, or hear of, or come to the knowledge of, in any way agreeable to the natural state and capacity of the human understanding. But the insufficiency of motives will not excuse, unless their being insufficient arises not from the moral state of the will or inclination itself, but from the state of the natural understanding. The great kindness and generosity of another may be a motive insufficient to excite gratitude in the person that receives the kindness, through his vile and ungrateful temper; in this case, the insufficiency of the motive arises from the state of the will, or inclination of heart, and does not at all excuse. But if this generosity is not sufficient to excite gratitude, being unknown, there being no means of information adequate to the state and measure of the person's faculties, this insufficiency is attended with a natural inability which entirely excuses.

Secondly—As to such motions of body, or exercises and alterations of mind, which do not consist in the

immanent acts or state of the will itself, but are supposed to be required as effects of the will, I say, in such supposed effects of the will, in cases wherein there is no want of a capacity of understanding, that inability, and that only, excuses, which consists in want of connection between them and the will. If the will fully complies, and the proposed effect does not prove, according to the laws of nature, to be connected with his volition, the man is perfectly excused; he has a natural inability to the thing required. For the will itself, as has been observed, is all that can be directly and immediately required by command, and other things only indirectly, as connected with the will. If, therefore, there be a full compliance of will, the person has done his duty, and if other things do not prove to be connected with his volition, that is not owing to him.

Thirdly—Both these kinds of natural inability that have been mentioned, and so all inability that excuses, may be resolved into one thing, namely, want of natural capacity or strength, either capacity of understanding, or external strength; for when there are external defects and obstacles, they would be no obstacles were it not for the imperfection and limitations of understanding and strength.

Corollary.—If things for which men have a moral inability may properly be the matter of precept or command, then they may also of invitation and counsel. Commands and invitations come very much to the same thing, the difference is only circumstantial; commands are as much a manifestation of the will of him that speaks as invitations, and as much testimonies of expectation of compliance. The difference between them lies in nothing that touches the affair in hand. The main difference between command and invitation consists in the enforcement of the will of him who commands or invites. In the latter it is his kindness, the goodness which his will arises from; in the former it is his authority. But whatever be the ground of the will of him that speaks, or the enforcement of what he says, yet seeing neither his will nor expectation is any more testified in the one case than the other, therefore a person's being known to be morally unable to do the thing to which he is directed by invitation, is no more an evidence of insincerity in him that directs,

in manifesting either a will or expectation which he has not, than his being known to be morally unable to do what he is directed to by command. So that all this grand objection of Arminians against the inability of fallen men to exert faith in Christ, or to perform other spiritual gospel duties, from the sincerity of God's counsels and invitations, must be without force.

SECTION V.

That Sincerity of Desires and Endeavours which is supposed to Excuse in the Non-performance of Things in themselves Good particularly considered.

It is what is much insisted on by many, that some men, though they are not able to perform spiritual duties, such as repentance of sin, love to God, a cordial acceptance of Christ as exhibited and offered in the Gospel, &c., yet may sincerely desire and endeavour these things, and, therefore, must be excused, it being unreasonable to blame them for the omission of those things which they sincerely desire and endeavour to do, but cannot do.

Concerning this matter, the following things may be observed :—

Firstly—What is here supposed, is a great mistake and gross absurdity; even that men may sincerely choose and desire those spiritual duties of love, acceptance, choice, rejection, &c., consisting in the exercise of the will itself, or in the disposition and inclination of the heart, and yet not be able to perform or exert them. This is absurd, because it is absurd to suppose that a man should directly, properly, and sincerely incline to have an inclination, which, at the same time, is contrary to his inclination; for that is to suppose him not to be inclined to that which he is inclined to. If a man, in the state and acts of his will and inclination, does properly and directly fall in with those duties, he therein performs them, for the duties themselves consist in that very thing; they consist in the state and acts of the will being so formed and directed. If the soul properly and

sincerely falls in with a certain proposed act of will or choice, the soul therein makes that choice its own. Even as when a moving body falls in with a proposed direction of its motion, that is the same thing as to move in that direction.

Secondly—That which is called a desire and willingness for those inward duties, in such as do not perform them, has respect to these duties only indirectly and remotely, and is improperly represented as a willingness for them, not only because, as was observed before, it respects those good volitions only in a distant view, and with respect to future time, but also because evermore, not these things themselves, but something else, that is alien and foreign, is the object that terminates these volitions and desires.

A drunkard who continues in his drunkenness, being under the power of a love and violent appetite to strong drink, and without any love to virtue, but being also extremely covetous and close, and very much exercised and grieved at the diminution of his estate, and prospect of poverty, may in a sort desire the virtue of temperance, and though his present will is to gratify his extravagant appetite, yet he may wish he had a heart to forbear future acts of intemperance, and forsake his excesses, through an unwillingness to part with his money, but still he goes on with his drunkenness; his wishes and endeavours are insufficient and ineffectual; such a man has no proper, direct, sincere willingness to forsake this vice, and the vicious deeds which belong to it, for he acts voluntarily in continuing to drink to excess; his desire is very improperly called a willingness to be temperate, it is no true desire of that virtue, for it is not that virtue that terminates his wishes, nor have they any direct respect at all to it. It is only the saving his money, and avoiding poverty, that terminates and exhausts the whole strength of his desire. The virtue of temperance is regarded only very indirectly and improperly, even as a necessary means of gratifying the vice of covetousness.

So a man of an exceedingly corrupt and wicked heart, who has no love to God and Jesus Christ, but, on the contrary, being very profanely and carnally inclined, has the greatest distaste of the things of religion, and

enmity against them, yet being of a family that from one generation to another have most of them died in youth of an hereditary consumption, and so having little hope of living long, and having been instructed in the necessity of a supreme love to Christ, and gratitude for his death and sufferings, in order to his salvation from eternal misery, if under these circumstances he should, through fear of eternal torments, wish he had such a disposition, but his profane and carnal heart remaining, he continues still in his habitual distaste of, and enmity to, God and religion, and wholly without any exercise of that love and gratitude—as doubtless the very devils themselves, notwithstanding all the devilishness of their temper, would wish for a holy heart, if by that means they could get out of hell—in this case, there is no sincere willingness to love Christ, and choose him as his chief good; these holy dispositions and exercises are not at all the direct object of the will; they truly share no part of the inclination or desire of the soul; but all is terminated on deliverance from torment; and these graces and pious volitions, notwithstanding this forced consent, are looked upon as undesirable—as when a sick man desires a dose he greatly abhors, to save his life.

From these things it appears, thirdly, that this indirect willingness which has been spoken of is not that exercise of the will which the command requires, but is entirely a different one; being a volition of a different nature, and terminated altogether on different objects, wholly falling short of that virtue of will which the command has respect to.

Fourthly—This other volition, which has only some indirect concern with the duty required, cannot excuse for the want of that good will itself, which is commanded, being not the thing which answers and fulfils the command, and being wholly destitute of the virtue which the command seeks.

Further to illustrate this matter. If a child has a most excellent father, that has ever treated him with fatherly kindness and tenderness, and has every way in the highest degree merited his love and dutiful regard, being withal very wealthy, but the son is of so vile a disposition, that he inveterately hates his father, and

yet, apprehending that his hatred of him is like to prove his ruin, by bringing him finally to poverty and abject circumstances, through his father's disinheriting him, or otherwise, which is exceeding cross to his avarice and ambition, he, therefore, wishes it were otherwise; but yet, remaining under the invincible power of his vile and malignant disposition, he continues still in his settled hatred of his father. Now, if such a son's indirect willingness to have love and honour towards his father at all acquits or excuses before God for his failing of actually exercising these dispositions towards him which God requires, it must be on one of these two accounts, firstly, either that it answers and fulfils the command. But this it does not, by the supposition, because the thing commanded is love and honour to his worthy parent. If the command be proper and just, as is supposed, then it obliges to the thing commanded, and so nothing else but that can answer the obligation. Or, secondly, it must be at least because there is that virtue or goodness in his indirect willingness that is equivalent to the virtue required, and so balances or countervails it, and makes up for the want of it. But that also is contrary to the supposition. The willingness the son has merely from a regard to money and honour, has no goodness in it, to countervail the want of the pious filial respect required.

Sincerity and reality, in that indirect willingness which has been spoken of, do not make it the better. That which is real and hearty is often called sincere, whether it be in virtue or vice. Some persons are sincerely bad, others are sincerely good, and others may be sincere and hearty in things which are in their own nature indifferent—as a man may be sincerely desirous of eating when he is hungry. But a being sincere, hearty, and in good earnest, is no virtue, unless it be in a thing that is virtuons. A man may be sincere and hearty in joining a crew of pirates, or a gang of robbers. When the devils cried out, and besought Christ not to torment them, it was no mere pretence; they were very hearty in their desires not to be tormented; but this did not make their will or desires virtuous. And if men have sincere desires, which are in their kind and nature no better, it can be no excuse for the want of any required virtue.

And as a man's being sincere in such an indirect desire or willingness to do his duty, as has been mentioned, cannot excuse for the want of performance, so it is with endeavours arising from such a willingness. The endeavours can have no more goodness in them than the will which they are the effect and expression of. And, therefore, however sincere and real, and however great a person's endeavours are, yea, though they should be to the utmost of his ability, unless the will which they proceed from be truly good and virtuous, they can be of no avail, influence, or weight to any purpose whatsoever, in a moral sense or respect. That which is not truly virtuous in God's sight, is looked upon by him as good for nothing, and so can be of no value, weight, or influence in his account, to recommend, satisfy, excuse, or make up for any moral defect. For nothing can counter-balance evil but good. If evil be in one scale, and we put a great deal into the other, sincere and earnest desires, and many and great endeavours, yet if there be no real goodness in all, there is no weight in it, and so it does nothing towards balancing the real weight which is in the opposite scale. It is only like the subtracting a thousand noughts from before a real number, which leaves the sum just as it was.

Indeed, such endeavours may have a negatively good influence. Those things which have no positive virtue, have no positive moral influence, yet they may be an occasion of persons avoiding some positive evils. As if a man were in the water with a neighbour that he had illwill to, who could not swim, holding him by his hand, which neighbour was much in debt to him, and should be tempted to let him sink and drown, but should refuse to comply with the temptation, not from love to his neighbour, but from the love of money, and because by his drowning he should lose his debt; that which he does in preserving his neighbour from drowning is nothing good in the sight of God; yet hereby he avoids the greater guilt that would have been contracted if he had designedly let his neighbour sink and perish. But when Arminians, in their disputes with Calvinists, insist so much on sincere desires and endeavours, as what must excuse men must be accepted of God, &c., it is manifest they have respect to some positive moral weight or influence of those desires and endeavours. Accepting, justifying, or excusing on the account of sincere honest

endeavours, as they are called, and men's doing what they can, &c., has relation to some moral value, something that is accepted as good, and as such, countervailing some defect.

But there is a great and unknown deceit arising from the ambiguity of the phrase, sincere endeavours. Indeed, there is a vast indistinctness and unfixedness in most, or at least very many, of the terms used to express things pertaining to moral and spiritual matters. Whence arise innumerable mistakes, strong prejudices, inextricable confusion, and endless controversy.

The word sincere is most commonly used to signify something that is good; men are habituated to understand by it the same as honest and upright; which terms excite an idea of something good in the strictest and highest sense; good in the sight of him who sees not only the outward appearance, but the heart. And, therefore, men think that if a person be sincere, he will certainly be accepted. If it be said that any one is sincere in his endeavours, this suggests to men's minds as much as that his heart and will is good, that there is no defect of duty, as to virtuous inclination, he honestly and uprightly desires and endeavours to do as he is required, and this leads them to suppose that it would be very hard and unreasonable to punish him, only because he is unsuccessful in his endeavours, the thing endeavoured being beyond his power; whereas it ought to be observed, that the word sincere has two different significations.

Firstly—Sincerity, as the word is sometimes used, signifies no more than reality of will and endeavour, with respect to anything that is professed or pretended, without any consideration of the nature of the principle or aim, whence this real will and true endeavour arises. If a man has some real desire to obtain a thing, either direct or indirect, or does really endeavour after a thing, he is said sincerely to desire or endeavour it, without any consideration of the goodness or virtuousness of the principle he acts from, or any excellency or worthiness of the end he acts for. Thus a man that is kind to his neighbour's wife, who is sick and languishing, and very helpful in her case, makes a show of desiring and endeavouring her restoration to health and vigour, and not

only makes such a show, but there is a reality in his pretence, he does heartily and earnestly desire to have her health restored, and uses his true and utmost endeavours for it; he is said sincerely to desire and endeavour it, because he does so truly or really, though perhaps the principle he acts from is no other than a vile and scandalous passion; having lived in adultery with her, he earnestly desires to have her health and vigour restored, that he may return to his criminal pleasures with her.

Or, secondly, by sincerity is meant, not merely a reality of will and endeavour of some sort or other, and from some consideration or other, but a virtuous sincerity. That is, that in the performance of those particular acts that are the matter of virtue, or duty, there be not only the matter, but the form and essence of virtue, consisting in the aim that governs the act, and the principle exercised in it. There is not only the reality of the act, that is as it were the body of the duty, but also the soul, which should properly belong to such a body. In this sense, a man is said to be sincere, when he acts with a pure intention; not from sinister views, or bye-ends; he not only in reality desires and seeks the thing to be done, or qualification to be obtained, for some end or other, but he wills the thing directly and properly, as neither forced nor bribed; the virtue of the thing is properly the object of the will.

In the former sense a man is said to be sincere, in opposition to a mere pretence and show of the particular thing to be done or exhibited, without any real desire or endeavour at all. In the latter sense a man is said to be sincere, in opposition to that show of virtue there is in merely doing the matter of duty, without the reality of the virtue itself in the soul, and the essence of it, which there is a show of. A man may be sincere in the former sense, and yet in the latter be in the sight of God, who searches the heart, a vile hypocrite.

In the latter kind of sincerity only, is there anything truly valuable or acceptable in the sight of God. And this is the thing which in Scripture is called sincerity, uprightness, integrity, truth in the inward parts, and a being of a perfect heart. And if there be such a sincerity, and such a degree of it as there ought to be, and *there be* anything further that the man is not able to

perform, or which does not prove to be connected with his sincere desires and endeavours, the man is wholly excused and acquitted in the sight of God; his will shall surely be accepted for his deed; and such a sincere will and endeavour is all that in strictness is required of him by any command of God. But as to the other kind of sincerity of desires and endeavours, it having no virtue in it, (as was observed before,) can be of no avail before God, in any case, to recommend, satisfy, or excuse, and has no positive moral weight or influence whatsoever.

Corrollary 1.—Hence it may be inferred, that nothing in the reason and nature of things appears, from the consideration of any moral weight of that former kind of sincerity, which has been spoken of, at all obliging us to believe, or leading us to suppose, that God has made any positive promises of salvation, or grace, or any saving assistance, or any spiritual benefit whatsoever, to any desires, prayers, endeavours, striving, or obedience of those who hitherto have no true virtue or holiness in their hearts; though we should suppose all the sincerity, and the utmost degree of endeavour, that is possible to be in a person without holiness,

Some object against God's requiring, as the condition of salvation, those holy exercises, which are the result of a supernatural renovation; such as a supreme respect to Christ, love to God, loving holiness for its own sake, &c., that these inward dispositions and exercises are above man's power, as they are by nature; and, therefore, that we may conclude, that when men are brought to be sincere in their endeavours, and do as well as they can, they are accepted; and this must be all that God requires in order to man's being received as the objects of his favour, and must be what God has appointed as the condition of salvation. Concerning which I would observe, that in such a manner of speaking of man's being accepted, because they are sincere, and do as well as they can, there is evidently a supposition of some virtue, some degree of that which is truly good; though it does not go so far as were to be wished. For if men do what they can, unless their so doing be from some good principle, disposition, or exercise of heart, some virtuous inclination or act of the will, their so doing what they can is in some respects not a whit

better than if they did nothing at all. In such a case, there is no more positive moral goodness in a man's doing what he can, than in a windmill's doing what it can; because the action does no more proceed from virtue; and there is nothing in such sincerity of endeavour, or doing what we can, that should render it any more a proper or fit recommendation to positive favour and acceptance, or the condition of any reward or actual benefit, than doing nothing; for both the one and the other are alike nothing as to any true moral weight or value.

Corollary 2.—Hence also it follows that there is nothing that appears in the reason and nature of things, which can justly lead us to determine that God will certainly give the necessary means of salvation, or some way or other bestow true holiness and eternal life, on those heathen, who are sincere, (in the sense above explained,) in their endeavours to find out the will of the Deity, and to please him, according to their light, that they may escape his future displeasure and wrath, and obtain happiness in their future state through his favour.

SECTION VI.

Liberty of Indifference not only not necessary to Virtue, but utterly inconsistent with it; and all, either Virtuous or Vicious Habits or Inclinations, inconsistent with Arminian Notions of Liberty and Moral Agency.

To suppose such a freedom of will, as Arminians talk of, to be requisite to virtue and vice, is many ways contrary to common sense.

If indifference belongs to liberty of will, as Arminians suppose, and it be essential to a virtuous action that it be performed in a state of liberty, as they also suppose, it will follow that it is essential to a virtuous action that it be performed in a state of indifference; and if it be performed in a state of indifference, then doubtless it must be performed in the time of indifference. And so it will follow, that in order to the virtuousness of an act, the heart must be indifferent in the time of the perform-

ance of that act, and the more indifferent and cold the heart is with relation to the act which is performed, so much the better, because the act is performed with so much the greater liberty. But is this agreeable to the light of nature? Is it agreeable to the notions which mankind, in all ages, have of virtue, that it lies in that which is contrary to indifference, even in the tendency and inclination of the heart to virtuous action; and that the stronger the inclination, and so the further from indifference, the more virtuous the heart, and so much the more praiseworthy the act which proceeds from it.

If we should suppose (contrary to what has been before demonstrated) that there may be an act of will in a state of indifference—for instance, this act, namely, the will's determining to put itself out of a state of indifference and give itself a preponderation one way—then it would follow, on Arminian principles, that this act or determination of the will is that alone wherein virtue consists; because, this only is performed while the mind remains in a state of indifference, and so in a state of liberty; for when once the mind is put out of its equilibrium it is no longer in such a state; and, therefore, all the acts which follow afterwards proceeding from bias, can have the nature neither of virtue nor vice. Or, if the thing which the will can do, while yet in a state of indifference and so of liberty, be only to suspend acting and determine to take the matter into consideration, then this determination is that alone wherein virtue consists, and not proceeding to action after the scale is turned by consideration. So that it will follow from these principles, that all that is done after the mind by any means is once out of its equilibrium and already possessed by an inclination, and arising from that inclination, has nothing of the nature of virtue or vice, and is worthy neither of blame nor praise. But how plainly contrary is this to the universal sense of mankind, and to the notion they have of sincerely virtuous actions? Which is, that they are actions which proceed from a heart well-disposed and inclined; and the stronger and the more fixed and determined the good disposition of the heart, the greater the sincerity of virtue, and so the more of the truth and reality of it. But if there be any acts which are done in a state of equilibrium, or spring immediately from perfect indifference and coldness of heart, they cannot arise from any

good principle or disposition in the heart; and, consequently, according to common sense, have no sincere goodness in them, having no virtue of heart in them. To have a virtuous heart is to have a heart that favours virtue and is friendly to it, and not one perfectly cold and indifferent about it.

And, besides, the actions that are done in a state of indifference, or that arise immediately out of such a state, cannot be virtuous, because, by the supposition, they are not determined by any preceding choice. For if there be preceding choice, then choice intervenes between the act and the state of indifference; which is contrary to the supposition of the acts arising immediately out of indifference. But those acts which are not determined by preceding choice, cannot be virtuous or vicious by Arminian principles, because they are not determined by the will. So that neither one way nor the other, can any actions be virtuous or vicious according to Arminian principles. If the action be determined by a preceding act of choice it cannot be virtuous, because the action is not done in a state of indifference, nor does immediately arise from such a state, and so is not done in a state of liberty. If the action be not determined by a preceding act of choice, then it cannot be virtuous, because then the will is not self-determined in it. So that it is made certain, that neither virtue nor vice can ever find any place in the universe.

Moreover, that it is necessary to a virtuous action that it be performed in a state of indifference, under a notion of that being a state of liberty, is contrary to common sense; as it is a dictate of common sense, that indifference itself, in many cases, is vicious, and so to a high degree. As if when I see my neighbour or near friend, and one who has in the highest degree merited of me, in extreme distress, and ready to perish, I find an indifference in my heart with respect to anything proposed to be done, which I can easily do, for his relief. So if it should be proposed to me to blaspheme God, or kill my father, or do numberless other things which might be mentioned, the being indifferent, for a moment, would be highly vicious and vile.

And it may be further observed, that to suppose this liberty of indifference is essential to virtue and vice,

destroys the great difference of degrees of the guilt of different crimes, and takes away the heinousness of the most flagitious horrid iniquities—such as adultery, bestiality, murder, perjury, blasphemy, &c. For according to these principles, there is no harm at all in having the mind in a state of perfect indifference with respect to these crimes; nay, it is absolutely necessary in order to any virtue in avoiding them, or vice in doing them. But for the mind to be in a state of indifference with respect to them, is to be next door to doing them; it is then infinitely near to choosing, and so committing the fact; for equilibrium is the next step to a degree of preponderation; and one, even the least degree of preponderation (all things considered) is choice. And not only so, but for the will to be in a state of perfect equilibrium with respect to such crimes, is for the mind to be in such a state as to be full as likely to choose them as to refuse them, to do them as to omit them. And if our minds must be in such a state wherein it is as near to choosing as refusing, and wherein it must of necessity, according to the nature of things, be as likely to commit them, as to refrain from them; where is the exceeding heinousness of choosing and committing them? If there be no harm in often being in such a state, wherein the probability of doing and forbearing are exactly equal, there being an equilibrium, and no more tendency to one than the other, then, according to the nature and laws of such a contingence, it may be expected, as an inevitable consequence of such a disposition of things, that we should choose them as often as reject them; that it should generally so fall out is necessary, as equality in the effect is the natural consequence of the equal tendency of the cause, or of the antecedent state of things from which the effect arises; why then should we be so exceedingly to blame, if it does so fall out.

It is many ways apparent that the Arminian scheme of liberty is utterly inconsistent with the being of any such things as either virtuous or vicious habits or dispositions. If liberty of indifference be essential to moral agency, then there can be no virtue in any habitual inclinations of the heart; which are contrary to indifference, and imply in their nature the very destruction and exclusion of it. They suppose nothing can be virtuous, in which no liberty is exercised; but how absurd is it to talk of exercising indifference under bias and preponderation!

And if self-determining power in the will be necessary to moral agency, praise, blame, &c., then nothing done by the will can be any further praise or blameworthy than so far as the will is moved, swayed and determined by itself, and the scales turned by the sovereign power the will has over itself. And, therefore, the will must not be put out of its balance already, the preponderation must not be determined and effected before hand, and so the self-determining act anticipated. Thus it appears another way, that habitual bias is inconsistent with that liberty which Arminians suppose to be necessary to virtue or vice, and so it follows, that habitual bias itself cannot be either virtuous or vicious.

The same thing follows from their doctrine concerning the inconsistence of necessity with liberty, praise, dispraise, &c. None will deny, that bias and inclination may be so strong as to be invincible, and leave no possibility of the will's determining contrary to it; and so be attended with necessity. This Dr. Whitby allows concerning the will of God, angels, and glorified saints, with respect to good; and the will of devils with respect to evil. Therefore, if necessity be inconsistent with liberty, then when fixed inclination is to such a degree of strength, it utterly excludes all virtue, vice, praise or blame. And if so, then the nearer habits are to this strength, the more do they impede liberty, and so diminish praise and blame. If very strong habits destroy liberty, the lesser ones proportionably hinder it, according to their degree of strength. And, therefore, it will follow, that then is the act most virtuous or vicious, when performed without any inclination or habitual bias at all; because it is then performed with most liberty.

Every prepossessing fixed bias on the mind brings a degree of moral inability for the contrary; because so far as the mind is biassed and prepossessed, so much hinderance is there of the contrary. And, therefore, if moral inability be inconsistent with moral agency, or the nature of virtue and vice, then so far as there is any such thing as evil disposition of heart, or habitual depravity of inclination—whether covetousness, pride, malice, cruelty, or whatever else—so much the more excusable persons are; so much the less have their evil acts of this kind the nature of vice. And, on the con-

trary, whatever excellent dispositions and inclinations they have, so much are they the less virtuous.

It is evident, that no habitual disposition of heart, whether it be to a greater or less degree, can be in any degree virtuous or vicious; or the actions which proceed from them at all praise or blameworthy. Because, though we should suppose the habit not to be of such strength as wholly to take away all moral ability and self-determining power; or hinder but that, although the act be partly from bias, yet it may be in part from self-determination; yet in this case, all that is from antecedent bias must be set aside, as of no consideration; and in estimating the degree of virtue or vice, no more must be considered than what arises from self-determining power, without any influence of that bias, because liberty is exercised in no more; so that all that is the exercise of habitual inclination is thrown away, as not belonging to the morality of the action. By which it appears, that no exercise of these habits, let them be stronger or weaker, can ever have anything of the nature of either virtue or vice.

Here if any one should say, that notwithstanding all these things, there may be the nature of virtue and vice in habits of the mind; because these habits may be the effects of those acts wherein the mind exercised liberty; that however the forementioned reasons will prove that no habits which are natural, or that are born or created with us, can be either virtuous or vicious, yet they will not prove this of habits, which have been acquired and established by repeated free acts.

To such an objector I would say, that this evasion will not at all help the matter. For if freedom of will be essential to the very nature of virtue and vice, then there is no virtue or vice but only in that very thing, wherein this liberty is exercised. If a man in one or more things that he does, exercises liberty, and then by those acts is brought into such circumstances, that his liberty ceases, and there follows a long series of acts or events that come to pass necessarily; those consequent acts are not virtuous or vicious, rewardable or punishable; but only the free acts that established this necessity; for in them alone was the man free. The following effects that are necessary,

have no more of the nature of virtue or vice, than health or sickness of body have properly the nature of virtue or vice, being the effects of a course of free acts of temperance or intemperance; or than the good qualities of a clock are of the nature of virtue, which are the effects of free acts of the artificer; or the goodness and sweetness of the fruits of a garden are moral virtues, being the effects of the free and faithful acts of the gardener. If liberty be absolutely requisite to the morality of actions, and necessity wholly inconsistent with it, as Arminians greatly insist, then no necessary effects whatsoever, let the cause be ever so good or bad, can be virtuous or vicious; but the virtue or vice must be only in the free cause. Agreeably to this, Dr. Whitby supposes the necessity that attends the good and evil habits of the saints in heaven, and damned in hell, which are the consequence of their free acts in their state of probation, are not rewardable or punishable.

On the whole, it appears, that if the notions of Arminians concerning liberty and moral agency be true, it will follow that there is no virtue in any such habits or qualities as humility, meekness, patience, mercy, gratitude, generosity, heavenly mindedness; nothing at all praiseworthy in loving Christ above father and mother, wife and children, or our own lives; or in delight in holiness, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, love to enemies, universal benevolence to mankind; and, on the other hand, there is nothing at all vicious, or worthy of dispraise, in the most sordid, beastly, malignant, devilish dispositions; in being ungrateful, profane, habitually hating God and things sacred and holy; or in being most treacherous, envious and cruel towards men. For all these things are dispositions and inclinations of the heart. And, in short, there is no such thing as any virtuous or vicious quality of mind; no such thing as inherent virtue and holiness, or vice and sin; and the stronger those habits or dispositions are, which used to be called virtuous and vicious, the further they are from being so indeed; the more violent men's lusts are, the more fixed their pride, envy, ingratitude and maliciousness, still the further are they from being blameworthy. If there be a man that by his own repeated acts, or by any other means, is come to be of the most hellish disposition, desperately inclined to treat his neighbours with injuriousness, contempt and malignity; the further

they should be from any disposition to be angry with him, or in the least to blame him. So, on the other hand, if there be a person, who is of a most excellent spirit, strongly inclining him to the most amiable actions, admirably meek, benevolent, &c., so much is he further from anything rewardable or commendable. On which principles, the man Jesus Christ was very far from being praiseworthy for those acts of holiness and kindness which he performed, these propensities being so strong in his heart. And above all, the infinitely holy and gracious God, is infinitely remote from anything commendable, his good inclinations being infinitely strong, and he, therefore, at the utmost possible distance from being at liberty. And in all cases, the stronger the inclinations of any are to virtue, and the more they love it, the less virtuous they are; and the more they love wickedness, the less vicious. Whether these things are agreeable to Scripture, let every Christian, and every man who has read the Bible, judge; and whether they are agreeable to common sense, let every one judge that hath human understanding in exercise.

And if we pursue these principles, we shall find that virtue and vice are wholly excluded out of the world; and that there never was, nor ever can be, any such thing as one or the other; either in God, angels, or men. No propensity, disposition, or habit can be virtuous or vicious, as has been shown, because they, so far as they take place, destroy the freedom of the will, the foundation of all moral agency, and exclude all capacity of either virtue or vice. And if habits and dispositions themselves be not virtuous nor vicious, neither can the exercise of these dispositions be so; for the exercise of bias is not the exercise of free self-determining will, and so there is no exercise of liberty in it. Consequently no man is virtuous or vicious, either in being well or ill disposed, nor in acting from a good or bad disposition. And whether this bias or disposition be habitual or not, if it exists but a moment before the act of will, which is the effect of it, it alters not the case, as to the necessity of the effect. Or if there be no previous disposition at all, either habitual or occasional, that determines the act, then it is not choice that determines it; it is, therefore, a contingence that happens to the man, arising from nothing in him; and is necessary, as to any inclination or choice of his; and therefore cannot make him either the better or

worse, any more than a tree is better than other trees, because it oftener happens to be lit upon by a swan or nightingale; or a rock more vicious than other rocks, because rattlesnakes have happened oftener to crawl over it. So that there is no virtue nor vice in good or bad dispositions, either fixed or transient, nor any virtue or vice in acting from any good or bad previous inclination; nor yet any virtue or vice in acting wholly without any previous inclination. Where then shall we find room for virtue and vice?

SECTION VII.

Arminian Notions of Moral Agency inconsistent with all Influence of Motive and Inducement in either Virtuous or Vicious Actions.

As Arminian notions of that liberty which is essential to virtue or vice are inconsistent with common sense, in their being inconsistent with all virtuous or vicious habits and dispositions, so they are no less so in their inconsistency with all influence of motives in moral actions.

It is equally against those notions of liberty of will, whether there be, previous to the act of choice, a preponderancy of the inclination, or a preponderancy of those circumstances which have a tendency to move the inclination; and, indeed, it comes to just the same thing. To say the circumstances of the mind are such as tend to sway and turn its inclination one way, is the same thing as to say the inclination of the mind, as under such circumstances, tends that way.

Or if any think it most proper to say that motives do alter the inclination, and give a new bias to the mind, it will not alter the case, as to the present argument; for if motives operate by giving the mind an inclination, then they operate by destroying the mind's indifference and laying it under a bias. But to do this, is to destroy the Arminian freedom; it is not to leave the will to its own self-determination, but to bring it into subjection to the power of something extrinsic, which operates upon it, sways and determines it, previous to its own determina-

tion. So that what is done from motive cannot be either virtuous or vicious. And, besides, if the acts of the will are excited by motives, those motives are the causes of those acts of the will; which makes the acts of the will necessary, as effects necessarily follow the efficiency of the cause. And if the influence and power of the motive causes the volition, then the influence of the motive determines volition, and volition does not determine itself, and so is not free in the sense of Arminians (as has been largely shown already), and consequently can be neither virtuous nor vicious.

The supposition which has already been taken notice of as an insufficient evasion in other cases, would be in like manner impertinently alleged in this case—namely, the supposition that liberty consists in a power of suspending action for the present, in order to deliberation. If it should be said, though it be true, that the will is under a necessity of finally following the strongest motive, yet it may for the present forbear to act upon the motive presented till there has been opportunity thoroughly to consider it, and compare its real weight with the merit of other motives, I answer as follows:—Here again it must be remembered, that if determining thus to suspend and consider be that act of the will wherein alone liberty is exercised, then in this all virtue and vice must consist; and the acts that follow this consideration, and are the effects of it, being necessary, are no more virtuous or vicious than some good or bad events which happen when men are fast asleep, and which are the consequences of what they did when they were awake. Therefore, I would here observe two things.

Firstly—To suppose that all virtue and vice in every case consists in determining whether to take time for consideration or not, is not agreeable to common sense. For according to such a supposition, the most horrid crimes, adultery, murder, blasphemy, &c., do not at all consist in the horrid nature of the things themselves, but only in the neglect of thorough consideration before they were perpetrated; which brings their viciousness to a small matter, and makes all crimes equal. If it be said that neglect of consideration, when such heinous evils are proposed to choice, is worse than in other

cases, I answer, this is inconsistent, as it supposes the very thing to be which at the same time is supposed not to be; it supposes all moral evil, all viciousness and heinousness, does not consist merely in the want of consideration. It supposes some crimes in themselves, in their own nature, to be more heinous than others, antecedent to consideration or inconsideration, which lays the person under a previous obligation to consider in some cases more than others.

Secondly—If it were so, that all virtue and vice in every case consisted only in the act of the will, whereby it determines whether to consider or no, it would not alter the case in the least as to the present argument; for, still in this act of the will on this determination, it is induced by some motive, and necessarily follows the strongest motive; and so is necessary, even in that act wherein alone it is either virtuous or vicious.

One thing more I would observe, concerning the inconsistence of Arminian notions of moral agency with the influence of motives. I suppose none will deny that it is possible for motives to be set before the mind so powerful, and exhibited in so strong a light, and under so advantageous circumstances, as to be invincible, and such as the mind cannot but yield to. In this case, Arminians will doubtless say, liberty is destroyed. And if so, then if motives are exhibited with half so much power, they hinder liberty in proportion to their strength, and go half-way towards destroying it. If a thousand degrees of motive abolish all liberty, then five hundred take it half away. If one degree of the influence of motive does not at all infringe or diminish liberty, then no more do two degrees; for nothing double is still nothing. And if two degrees do not diminish the will's liberty, no more do four, eight, sixteen, or six thousand. For nothing multiplied ever so much, comes to but nothing. If there be nothing in the nature of motive or moral suasion that is at all opposite to liberty, then the greatest degree of it cannot hurt liberty. But if there be anything in the nature of the thing that is against liberty, then the least degree of it hurts it in some degree, and, consequently, hurts and diminishes virtue. If invincible motives to that action which is good take away all the freedom of the act, and so all the virtue of it, then the more forcible

the motives are, so much the worse, so much the less virtue; and the weaker the motives are, the better for the cause of virtue; and none is best of all.

Now let it be considered whether these things are agreeable to common sense. If it should be allowed, that there are some instances wherein the soul chooses without any motive, what virtue can there be in such a choice? I am sure, there is no prudence or wisdom in it. Such a choice is made for no good end; for it is for no end at all. If it were for any end, the view of the end would be the motive exciting to the act; and if the act be for no good end, and so from no good aim, then there is no good intention in it; and, therefore, according to all our natural notions of virtue, no more virtue in it than in the motion of the smoke, which is driven to and fro by the wind, without any aim or end in the thing moved, and which knows not whither, nor why and wherefore, it is moved.

Corollary 1.—By these things it appears, that the argument against the Calvinists, taken from the use of counsels, exhortations, invitations, expostulations, &c., so much insisted on by Arminians, is truly against themselves. For these things can operate no other way to any good effect, than as in them is exhibited motive and inducement, tending to excite and determine the acts of the will. But it follows on their principles, that the acts of will excited by such causes, cannot be virtuous; because so far as they are from these, they are not from the will's self-determining power. Hence it will follow, that it is not worth the while to offer any arguments to persuade men to any virtuous volition or voluntary action; it is in vain to set before them the wisdom and amiableness of ways of virtue, or the odiousness and folly of ways of vice. This notion of liberty and moral agency frustrates all endeavours to draw men to virtue by instruction, or persuasion, precept, or example; for though these things may induce men to what is materially virtuous, yet at the same time they take away the form of virtue, because they destroy liberty; as they, by their own power, put the will out of its equilibrium, determine and turn the scale, and take the work of self-determining power out of its hands. And the clearer the instructions are that are given, the more powerful the arguments that are used, and the more moving the persuasions or exam-

ples, the more likely they are to frustrate their own design; because they have so much the greater tendency to put the will out of its balance, to hinder its freedom of self-determination; and so to exclude the very form of virtue, and the essence of whatsoever is praiseworthy.

So it clearly follows, from these principles, that God has no hand in any man's virtue, nor does at all promote it, either by a physical or moral influence; that none of the moral methods he uses with men to promote virtue in the world have tendency to the attainment of that end; that all the instructions which he has given to men, from the beginning of the world to this day, by prophets, or apostles, or by his Son Jesus Christ; that all his counsels, invitations, promises, threatenings, warnings, and expostulations; that all means he has used with men, in ordinances, or providences; yea, all influences of his spirit, ordinary and extraordinary, have had no tendency at all to excite any one virtuous act of the mind, or to promote anything morally good and commendable, in any respect. For there is no way that these, or any other means, can promote virtue but one of these three. Either, firstly, by a physical operation on the heart. But all effects that are wrought in men in this way, have no virtue in them, by the concurring voice of all Arminians. Or, secondly, morally, by exhibiting motives to the understanding, to excite good acts in the will. But it has been demonstrated, that volitions which are excited by motives, are necessary, and not excited by a self-moving power, and, therefore, by their principles, there is no virtue in them. Or, thirdly, by merely giving the will an opportunity to determine itself concerning the objects proposed, either to choose or reject, by its own uncaused, unmoved, uninfluenced self-determination. And if this be all, then all those means do more to promote virtue than vice; for they do nothing but give the will opportunity to determine itself either way, either to good or bad, without laying it under any bias to either; and so there is really as much of an opportunity given to determine in favour of evil as of good.

Thus that horrid blasphemous consequence will certainly follow from the Arminian doctrine which they charge on others, namely, that God acts an inconsistent part in using so many counsels, warnings, invitations, *entreaties, &c.*, with sinners, to induce them to forsake

sin and turn to the ways of virtue, and that all are insincere and fallacious. It will follow from their doctrine that God does these things when he knows, at the same time that they have no manner of tendency to promote the effect he seems to aim at, yea, knows that if they have any influence, this very influence will be inconsistent with such an effect, and will prevent it. But what an imputation of insincerity would this fix on him who is infinitely holy and true! So that theirs is the doctrine which if pursued in its consequences does horribly reflect on the most high, and fix on him the charge of hypocrisy, and not the doctrine of the Calvinist, according to their frequent and vehement exclamations and invectives.

Corollary 2.—From what has been observed in this section, it again appears that Arminian principles and notions, when fairly examined and pursued in their demonstrable consequences, do evidently shut all virtue out of the world, and make it impossible that there should ever be any such thing in any case, or that any such thing should ever be conceived of. For by these principles the very notion of virtue or vice implies absurdity and contradiction; for it is absurd in itself, and contrary to common sense, to suppose a virtuous act of mind without any good intention or aim; and by their principles it is absurd to suppose a virtuous act with a good intention or aim; for to act for an end is to act from a motive. So that if we rely on these principles, there can be no virtuous act with a good design and end, and it is self-evident that there can be none without; consequently there can be no virtuous act at all.

Corollary 3.—It is manifest that Arminian notions of moral agency and the being of a faculty of will cannot consist together, and that if there be any such thing as either a virtuous or vicious act, it cannot be an act of will—no will can be at all concerned in it; for that act which is performed without inclination, without motive, without end, must be performed without any concern of the will. To suppose an act of the will without these implies a contradiction. If the soul in its act has no motive or end, then in that act (as was observed before) it seeks nothing, goes after nothing, exerts no inclination to anything, and this implies that in that act it

desires nothing and chooses nothing, so that there is no act of choice in the case; and that is as much as to say there is no act of will in the case; which very effectually shuts all virtuous and vicious acts out of the universe; inasmuch as, according to this, there can be no virtuous or vicious act wherein the will is concerned; and according to the plainest dictates of reason, and the light of nature, and also the principles of Arminians themselves, there can be no virtuous or vicious act wherein the will is not concerned. And, therefore, there is no room for any virtuous or vicious acts at all.

Corollary 4.—If none of the moral actions of intelligent beings are influenced by either previous inclination or motive, another strange thing will follow, and this is, that God not only cannot foreknow any of the future moral actions of his creatures, but he can make no conjecture, can give no probable guess concerning them. For all conjecture in things of this nature must depend on some discerning or apprehension of these two things, previous disposition and motive, which, as has been observed, Arminian notions of moral agency in their real consequence altogether exclude.

PART IV.

WHEREIN THE CHIEF GROUNDS OF THE REASONINGS OF ARMINIANS, IN SUPPORT AND DEFENCE OF THE FORE MENTIONED NOTIONS OF LIBERTY, MORAL AGENCY, &c., AND AGAINST THE OPPOSITE DOCTRINE, ARE CONSIDERED.

SECTION I.

THE ESSENCE OF THE VIRTUE AND VICE OF DISPOSITIONS OF THE HEART, AND ACTS OF THE WILL, LIES NOT IN THEIR CAUSE, BUT THIER NATURE.

ONE main foundation of the reasons which are brought to establish the forementioned notions of liberty, virtue, vice, &c., is a supposition that the virtuousness of the dispositions or acts of the will consists not in the nature of these dispositions or acts, but wholly in the origin or cause of them; so that if the disposition of the mind or act of the will be ever so good, yet if the cause of the disposition or act be not our virtue, there is nothing virtuous or praiseworthy in it; and, on the contrary, if the will in its inclinations or acts be ever so bad, yet unless it arises from something that is our vice or fault, there is nothing vicious or blameworthy in it. Hence their grand objection and pretended demonstration, or self-evidence, against any virtue or commendableness, or vice or blameworthiness, of those habits or acts of the will which are not from some virtuous or vicious determination of the will itself.

Now, if this matter be well considered, it will appear to be altogether a mistake, yea, a gross absurdity; and

that it is most certain, that if there be any such things as a virtuous, or vicious disposition, or volition of mind, the virtuousness or viciousness of them consists not in the origin or cause of these things, but in the nature of them.

If the essence of virtuousness or commendableness, and of viciousness or fault, does not lie in the nature of the dispositions or acts of mind, which are said to be our virtue and our fault, but in their cause, then it is certain it lies no where at all. Thus, for instance, if the vice of a vicious act of will lies not in the nature of the act, but the cause, so that its being of a bad nature will not make it at all our fault, unless it arises from some faulty determination of ours as its cause, or something in us that is our fault, then, for the same reason, neither can the viciousness of that cause lie in the nature of the thing itself, but in its cause; that evil determination of ours is not our fault, merely because it is of a bad nature, unless it arises from some cause in us that is our fault. And when we come to this higher cause, still the reason of the thing holds good; though this cause be of a bad nature, yet we are not at all to blame on that account, unless it arises from something faulty in us. Nor yet can blameworthiness lie in the nature of this cause, but in the cause of that. And thus we must drive faultiness back from step to step, from a lower cause to a higher, *in infinitum;* and that is thoroughly to banish it from the world, and to allow it no possibility of existence any where in the universality of things. On these principles, vice or moral evil canot consist in anything that is an effect; because fault does not consist in the nature of things, but in their cause; as well as because effects are necessary, being unavoidably connected with their cause; therefore the cause only is to blame. And so it follows, that faultiness can lie only in that cause, which is a cause only, and no effect of anything. Nor yet can it lie in this; for then it must lie in the nature of the thing itself; not in its being from any determination of ours, nor anything faulty in us which is the cause, nor indeed from any cause at all, for by the supposition, it is no effect, and has no cause. And thus, he that will maintain it is not the nature of habits or acts of will that makes them virtuous or faulty, but the cause, must immediately run himself out of his own assertion, and in maintaining it, *will insensibly* contradict and deny it.

This is certain, that if effects are vicious and faulty, not from their nature, or from anything inherent in them, but because they are from a bad cause, it must be on account of the badness of the cause, and so on account of the nature of the cause; a bad effect in the will must be bad, because the cause is bad, or of an evil nature, or has badness as a quality inherent in it; and a good effect in the will must be good, by reason of the goodness of the cause, or its being of a good kind and nature. And if this be what is meant, the very supposition of fault and praise lying not in the nature of the thing, but the cause, contradicts itself, and does at least resolve the essence of virtue and vice into the nature of things, and supposes it originally to consist in that. And if a caviller has a mind to run from the absurdity by saying, "No, the fault of the thing which is the cause lies not in this, that the cause itself is of an evil nature, but that the cause is evil in that sense, that it is from another bad cause." Still the absurdity will follow him; for if so, then the cause before charged is at once acquitted, and all the blame must be laid to the higher cause, and must consist in that's being evil, or of an evil nature. So now we are come again to lay the blame of the thing blameworthy, to the nature of the thing, and not to the cause. And if any is so foolish as to go higher still, and ascend from step to step, till he is come to that which is the first cause concerned in the whole affair, and will say all the blame lies in that, then at last he must be forced to own, that the faultiness of the thing which he supposes alone blameworthy lies wholly in the nature of the thing, and not in the original or cause of it; for the supposition is, that it has no original, it is determined by no act of ours, is caused by nothing faulty in us, being absolutely without any cause. And so the race is at an end, but the evader is taken in his flight.

It is agreeable to the natural notions of mankind, that moral evil, with its desert of dislike and abhorrence, and all its other ill-deservings, consists in a certain deformity in the nature of certain dispositions of the heart, and acts of the will, and not in the deformity of something else, diverse from the very thing itself, which deserves abhorrence, supposed to be the cause of it; which would be absurd, because that would be to suppose a thing that is innocent and not evil is truly evil and faulty, because another thing is evil. It implies a con-

tradiction, for it would be to suppose the very thing which is morally evil and blameworthy is innocent and not blameworthy; but that something else, which is its cause, is only to blame. To say, that vice does not consist in the thing which is vicious, but in its cause, is the same as to say, that vice does not consist in vice, but in that which produces it.

It is true a cause may be to blame, for being the cause of vice; it may be wickedness in the cause, that it produces wickedness. But it would imply a contradiction to suppose that these two are the same individual wickedness; the wicked act of the cause in producing wickedness is one wickedness; and the wickedness produced, if there be any produced, is another. And, therefore, the wickedness of the latter does not lie in the former, but is distinct from it; and the wickedness of both lies in the evil nature of the things which are wicked.

The thing which makes sin hateful is that by which it deserves punishment; which is but the expression of hatred. And that which renders virtue lovely, is the same with that, on the account of which it is fit to receive praise and reward; which are but the expressions of esteem and love. But that which makes vice hateful, is its hateful nature; and that which renders virtue lovely, is its amiable nature. It is a certain beauty or deformity that is inherent in that good or evil will, which is the soul of virtue and vice (and not in the occasion of it) which is their worthiness of esteem or disesteem, praise or dispraise, according to the common sense of mankind. If the cause or occasion of the rise of an hateful disposition, or act of will, be also hateful, suppose another antecedent evil will; that is entirely another sin, and deserves punishment by itself, under a distinct consideration. There is worthiness of dispraise in the nature of an evil volition, and not wholly in some foregoing act which is its cause, otherwise the evil volition which is the effect is no moral evil, any more than sickness, or some other natural calamity, which arises from a cause morally evil.

Thus, for instance, ingratitude is hateful and worthy of dispraise according to common sense, not because *something* as bad or worse than ingratitude was the *cause that* produced it, but because it is hateful in itself,

by its own inherent deformity. So the love of virtue is amiable and worthy of praise, not merely because something else went before this love of virtue in our minds, which caused it to take place there—for instance, our own choice, we chose to love virtue, and by some method or other wrought ourselves into the love of it—but because of the amiableness and condecency of such a disposition and inclination of heart. If that was the case, that we did choose to love virtue, and so, produced that love in ourselves, this choice itself could be no otherwise amiable or praiseworthy than as love to virtue, or some other amiable inclination was exercised and implied in it. If that choice was amiable at all, it must be so on account of some quality in the nature of the choice. If we choose to love virtue, not in love to virtue, or anything that was good, and exercised no sort of good disposition in the choice, the choice itself was not virtuous nor worthy of any praise according to common sense, because the choice was not of a good nature.

It may not be improper here to take notice of something said by an author that has lately made a mighty noise in America—"A necessary holiness," says he,* "is no holiness. Adam could not be originally created in righteousnes and true holiness, because he must choose to be righteous before he could be righteous. And, therefore, he must exist, he must be created, yea, he must exercise thought and reflection before he was righteous." There is much more to the same effect in that place, and also in pages 437, 438, 439, and 440. If these things are so, it will certainly follow that the first choosing to be righteous is no righteous choice, there is no righteousness or holiness in it, because no choosing to be righteous goes before it; for he plainly speaks of choosing to be righteous as what must go before righteousness; and that which follows the choice, being the effect of the choice, cannot be righteousness or holiness; for an effect is a thing necessary and cannot prevent the influence or efficacy of its cause, and, therefore, is unavoidably dependent upon the cause; and he says, "A necessary holiness is no holiness." So that neither can a choice of righteousness be righteousness or holiness, nor can anything that is consequent on that choice and the effect of it be righteousness or

* *Scriptural Doctrine of Original Sin*, page 180, Third Edition.

holiness, nor can anything that is without choice be righteousness or holiness. So that by this scheme all righteousness and holiness is at once shut out of the world, and no door left open by which it can ever possibly enter into the world.

I suppose the way men came to entertain this absurd inconsistent notion with respect to internal inclinations and volitions themselves, or notions that imply it—namely, that the essence of their moral good or evil lies not in their nature, but their cause—was, that it is indeed a very plain dictate of common sense, that it is so with respect to all outward actions and sensible motions of the body, that the moral good or evil of them does not lie at all in the motions themselves, which taken by themselves are nothing of a moral nature; and the essence of all the moral good or evil that concerns them lies in those internal dispositions and volitions which are the cause of them. Now, being always used to determine this without hesitation or dispute, concerning external actions, which are the things that in the common use of language are signified by such phrases as men's actions or their doings, hence when they came to speak of volitions, and internal exercises of their inclinations, under the same denomination of their actions, or what they do, they unwarily determined the case must also be the same with these as with external actions, not considering the vast difference in the nature of the case.

If any shall still object and say, why is it not necessary that the cause should be considered, in order to determine whether anything be worthy of blame or praise? Is it agreeable to reason and common sense, that a man is to be praised or blamed for that which he is not the cause or author of, and has no hand in?

I answer, such phrases as being the cause, being the the author, having a hand, and the like, are ambiguous. They are most vulgarly understood for being the designing voluntary cause, or cause by antecedent choice; and it is most certain that men are not in this sense the causes or authors of the first act of their wills, in any case; as certain as anything is, or ever can be; for nothing can be more certain, than that a thing is not before it is, nor a thing of the same kind before the first

thing of that kind; and so no choice before the first choice. As the phrase, being the author, may be understood, not of being the producer by an antecedent act of will, but as a person may be said to be the author of the act of will itself, by his being the immediate agent, or the being that is acting, or in exercise in that act; if the phrase of being the author is used to signify this, then doubtless common sense requires men's being the authors of their own acts of will, in order to their being esteemed worthy of praise or dispraise on account of them. And common sense teaches, that they must be the authors of external actions, in the former sense, namely, their being the causes of them by an act of will or choice, in order to their being justly blamed or praised; but it teaches no such thing with respect to the acts of the will themselves. But this may appear more manifest by the things which will be observed in the following section.

SECTION II.

The Falseness and Inconsistence of that Metaphysical Notion of Action and Agency which seems to be generally entertained by the Defenders of the Arminian Doctrine concerning Liberty, Moral Agency, &c.

One thing that is made very much a ground of argument and supposed demonstration by Arminians, in defence of the forementioned principles, concerning moral agency, virtue, vice, &c., is their metaphysical notion of agency and action. They say, unless the soul has a self-determining power, it has no power of action; if its volitions be not caused by itself, but are excited and determined by some extrinsic cause, they cannot be the soul's own acts; and that the soul cannot be active, but must be wholly passive, in those effects which it is the subject of necessarily, and not from its own free determination.

Mr. Chubb lays the foundation of his scheme of liberty, and of his arguments to support it, very much in this position—that man is an agent, and capable of action.

Which doubtless is true; but self-determination belongs to his notion of action and is the very essence of it. Whence he infers that it is impossible for a man to act and be acted upon, in the same thing, at the same time; and that nothing that is an action, can be the effect of the action of another; and he insists, that a necessary agent, or an agent that is necessarily determined to act, is a plain contradiction.

But those are a precarious sort of demonstrations which men build on the meaning that they arbitrarily affix to a word; especially when that meaning is abstruse, inconsistent, and entirely diverse from the original sense of the word in common speech.

That the meaning of the word action, as Mr. Chubb and many others use it, is utterly unintelligible and inconsistent is manifest, because it belongs to their notion of an action, that it is something wherein is no passion or passiveness; that is (according to their sense of passiveness) it is under the power, influence or action of no cause. And this implies that action has no cause, and is no effect; for to be an effect implies passiveness, or the being subject to the power and action of its cause. And yet they hold that the mind's action is the effect of its own determination, yea, the mind's free and voluntary determination; which is the same with free choice. So that action is the effect of something preceding, even a preceding act of choice; and, consequently, in this effect the mind is passive, subject to the power and action of the preceding cause, which is the foregoing choice, and therefore cannot be active. So that here we have this contradiction, that action is always the effect of foregoing choice; and therefore cannot be action, because it is passive to the power of that preceding causal choice; and the mind cannot be active and passive in the same thing, at the same time. Again, they say necessity is utterly inconsistent with action, and a necessary action is a contradiction; and so their notion of action implies contingence, and excludes all necessity And therefore their notion of action implies that it has no necessary dependence or connection with anything foregoing; for such a dependence or connection excludes contingence, and implies necessity. And yet their notion of action implies necessity, and supposes that it is necessary, and *cannot* be contingent. For they suppose that whatever is

properly called action must be determined by the will and free choice; and this is as much as to say, that it must be necessary, being dependent upon, and determined by something foregoing—namely, a foregoing act of choice. Again, it belongs to their notion of action, of that which is a proper and mere act, that it is the beginning of motion, or of exertion of power, but yet it is implied in their notion of action that it is not the beginning of motion or exertion of power, but is consequent and dependent on a preceding exertion of power, namely, the power of will and choice; for they say there is no proper action but what is freely chosen, or, which is the same thing, determined by a foregoing act of free choice But if any of them shall see cause to deny this, and say they hold no such thing as that every action is chosen, or determined, by a foregoing choice, but that the very first exertion of will only, undetermined by any preceding act, is properly called action, then I say, such a man's notion of action implies necessity; for what the mind is the subject of without the determination of its own previous choice, it is the subject of necessarily as to any hand that free choice has in the affair; and without any ability the mind has to prevent it, by any will or election of its own; because by the supposition it precludes all previous acts of the will or choice in the case which might prevent it. So that it is again, in this other way, implied in their notion of act, that it is both necessary and not necessary. Again, it belongs to their notion of an act, that it is no effect of a predetermining bias or preponderation, but springs immediately out of indifference and this implies that it cannot be from foregoing choice, which is foregoing preponderation; if it be not habitual, but occasional, yet if it causes the act, it is truly previous, efficacious, and determining. And yet, at the same time, it is essential to their notion of an act, that it is what the agent is the author of freely and voluntarily, and that is, by previous choice and design.

So that, according to their notion of an act considered with regard to its consequences, these following things are all essential to it, namely:—That it should be necessary and not necessary; that it should be from a cause and no cause; that it should be the fruit of choice and design and not the fruit of choice and design; that it should be the beginning of motion or exertion, and yet

consequent on previous exertion; that it should be before it is; that it should spring immediately out of indifference and equilibrium, and yet be the effect of preponderation; that it should be self-originated and also have its original from something else; that it is what the mind causes itself, of its own will, and can produce or prevent according to its choice or pleasure, and yet what the mind has no power to prevent, it precluding all previous choice in the affair.

So that an act, according to their metaphysical notion of it, is something of which there is no idea, it is nothing but a confusion of the mind excited by words without any distinct meaning, and is an absolute non-entity, and that in two respects. Firstly, there is nothing in the world that ever was, is, or can be, to answer the things which must belong to this description according to what they suppose to be essential to it. And, secondly, there neither is, nor ever was, nor can be, any notion or idea to answer the word as they use and explain it. For if we should suppose any such notion, it would many ways destroy itself. But it is impossible any idea or notion should subsist in the mind whose very nature and essence which constitutes it destroys it. If some learned philosopher, who had been abroad, in giving an account of the curious observations he had made in his travels, should say, "He had been in Terra del Fuego and there had seen an animal, which he calls by a certain name, that begat and brought forth itself, and yet had a sire and a dam distinct from itself; that it had an appetite and was hungry before it had a being; that his master who led him and governed him at his pleasure, was always governed by him and driven by him where he pleased; that when he moved he took a step before the first step; that he went with his head first, and yet always went tail foremost, and this though he had neither head nor tail." It would be no impudence at all to tell such a traveller, though a learned man, that he himself had no notion or idea of such an animal as he gave an account of, and never had, nor ever would have.

As the forementioned notion of action is very inconsistent, so it is wholly diverse from the original meaning of the word. The more usual signification of it in *vulgar* speech seems to be some motion or exertion of

power that is voluntary, or that is the effect of the will, and is used in the same sense as doing; and most commonly it is used to signify outward actions. So thinking is often distinguished from acting, and desiring and willing from doing.

Besides this more usual and proper signification of the word action, there are other ways in which the word is used that are less proper, which yet have place in common speech, Oftentimes it is used to signify some motion or alteration in inanimate things, with relation to some object and effect. So the spring of a watch is said to act upon the chain and wheels; the sunbeams to act upon plants and trees; and the fire to act upon wood. Sometimes the word is used to signify motions, alterations, and exertions of power, which are seen in corporeal things, considered absolutely, especially when these motions seem to arise from some internal cause which is hidden, so that they have a greater resemblance of those motions of our bodies which are the effects of internal volition, or invisible exertions of will. So the fermentation of liquor, the operations of the loadstone, and of electrical bodies, are called the action of these things. And sometimes the word action is used to signify the exercise of thought, or of will and inclination; so meditating, loving, hating, inclining, disinclining, choosing and refusing, may be sometimes called acting, though more rarely (unless it be by philosophers and metaphysicians) than in any of the other senses.

But the word is never used in vulgar speech in that sense which Arminian divines use it in, namely, for the self-determinate exercise of the will, or an exertion of the soul that arises without any necessary connection with anything foregoing, If a man does something voluntarily, or as the effect of his choice, then, in the most proper sense, and as the word is most originally and commonly used, he is said to act; but whether that choice or volition be self-determined, or no, whether it be connected with foregoing habitual bias, whether it be the certain effect of the strongest motive, or some extrinsic cause, never comes into consideration in the meaning of the word.

And if the word action is arbitrarily used by some men otherwise, to suit some scheme of metaphysics or morality, no argument can reasonably be founded on such a use of

this term to prove anything but their own pleasure. For divines and philosophers strenuously to urge such arguments, as though they were sufficient to support and demonstrate a whole scheme of moral philosophy and divinity, is certainly to erect a mighty edifice on the sand, or rather on a shadow. And though it may now perhaps, through custom, have become natural for them to use the word in this sense (if that may be called a sense or meaning which is so inconsistent with itself), yet this does not prove that it is agreeable to the natural notions men have of things, or that there can be anything in the creation that should answer such a meaning. And though they appeal to experience, yet the truth is that men are so far from experiencing any such thing, that it is impossible for them to have any conception of it.

If it should be objected, that action and passion are doubtless words of a contrary signification—but to suppose that the agent, in its action, is under the power and influence of something extrinsic, is to confound action and passion, and make them the same thing—

I answer, that action and passion are doubtless, as they are sometimes used, words of opposite significations, but not as signifying opposite existences, but only opposite relations. The words cause and effect are terms of opposite signification, but, nevertheless, if I assert that the same thing may, at the same time, in different respects and relations, be both cause and effect, this will not prove that I confound the terms. The soul may be both active and passive in the same thing in different respects, active with relation to one thing, and passive with relation to another. The word passion, when set in opposition to action, or rather activeness, is merely a relative term; it signifies no effect or cause, nor any proper existence, but is the same with passiveness, or a being passive, or a being acted upon by something. Which is a mere relation of a thing to some power or force exerted by some cause, producing some effect in it, or upon it. And action, when set properly in opposition to passion, or passiveness, is no real existence; it is not the same with *an action*, but is a mere relation; it is the activeness of something on another thing, being the opposite relation to the other, namely, a relation of power, or force, exerted by some cause, towards another thing, *which is* the subject of the effect of that power. Indeed

the word action is frequently used to signify something not merely relative, but more absolute, and a real existence; as when we say *an action;* when the word is not used transitively, but absolutely, for some motion or exercise of body or mind, without any relation to any object or effect; and as used thus, it is not properly the opposite of passion, which ordinarily signifies nothing absolute, but merely the relation of being acted upon. And, therefore, if the word action be used in the like relative sense, then action and passion are only two contrary relations. And it is no absurdity to suppose that contrary relations may belong to the same thing, at the same time, with respect to different things. So to suppose that there are acts of the soul by which a man voluntarily moves, and acts upon objects, and produces effects, which yet themselves are effects of something else, and wherein the soul itself is the object of something acting upon, and influencing that, does not at all confound action and passion. The words may nevertheless be properly of opposite signification; there may be as true and real a difference between acting and being caused to act, though we should suppose the soul to be both in the same volition, as there is between living, and being quickened, or made to live. It is no more a contradiction to suppose that action may be the effect of some other cause, besides the agent, or being that acts, than to suppose that life may be the effect of some other cause, besides the liver, or the being that lives, in whom life is caused to be.

The thing which has led men into this inconsistent notion of action, when applied to volition, as though it were essential to this internal action, that the agent should be self-determined in it, and that the will should be the cause of it, was probably this, that according to the sense of mankind, and the common use of language it is so, with respect to men's external actions, which are what originally, and according to the vulgar use and most proper sense of the word, are called actions. Men in these are self-directed, self-determined, and their wills are the cause of the motions of their bodies, and the external things that are done; so that unless men do them voluntarily, and of choice, and the action be determined by their antecedent volition, it is no action or doing of theirs. Hence some metaphysicians have been led unwarily, but exceeding absurdly, to suppose the same con-

cerning volition itself, that that also must be determined by the will, which is to be determined by antecedent volition, as the motion of the body is, not considering the contradiction it implies.

But it is very evident, that in the metaphysical distinction between action and passion, (though long since become common and the general vogue,) due care his not been taken to conform language to the nature of things, or to any distinct clear ideas. As it is in innumerable other philosophical, metaphysical terms, used in these disputes; which has occasioned inexpressible difficulty, contention, error, and confusion.

And thus, probably, it came to be thought, that necessity was inconsistent with action, as these terms are applied to volition. First, these terms action and necessity are changed from their original meaning, as signifying external voluntary action, and constraint, (in which meaning they are evidently inconsistent,) to signify quite other things, namely, volition itself and certainty of existence. And when the change of signification is made, care is not taken to make proper allowances and abatements for the difference of sense; but still the same things are unwarily attributed to action and necessity, in the new meaning of the words, which plainly belonged to them in their first sense; and on this ground, maxims are established without any real foundation, as though they were the most certain truths, and the most evident dictates of reason.

But however strenuously it is maintained that what is necessary cannot properly be called action, and that a necessary action is contradiction, yet it is probable there are few Arminian divines who, if thoroughly tried, would stand to these principles. They will allow that God is in the highest sense an active being and the highest fountain of life and action; and they would not probably deny that those that are called God's acts of righteousness, holiness, and faithfulness, are truly and properly God's acts, and God is really a holy agent in them; and yet I trust they will not deny that God necessarily acts justly and faithfully, and that it is impossible for him to act unrighteously and unholily.

SECTION III.

The Reasons why some think it Contrary to Common Sense to Suppose those Things which are Necessary to be Worthy of either Praise or Blame.

It is abundantly affirmed and urged by Arminian writers that it is contrary to common sense and the natural notions and apprehensions of mankind to suppose otherwise than that necessity (making no distinction between natural and moral necessity) is inconsistent with virtue and vice, praise and blame, reward and punishment; and their arguments from hence have been greatly triumphed in, and have been not a little perplexing to many who have been friendly to the truth as clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures. It has seemed to them indeed difficult to reconcile Calvinistic doctrines with the notions men commonly have of justice and equity; and the true reasons of it seem to be these that follow:—

I.—It is indeed a very plain dictate of common sense that natural necessity is wholly inconsistent with just praise or blame. If men do things which in themselves are very good, fit to be brought to pass with very happy effects, properly against their wills, and cannot help it—or do them from a necessity, that is without their wills, or with which their wills have no concern or connection—then it is a plain dictate of common sense that it is none of their virtue, nor any moral good in them, and that they are not worthy to be rewarded or praised, or at all esteemed, honoured, or loved, on that account. And, on the other hand, that if from like necessity they do those things which in themselves are very unhappy and pernicious, and do them because they cannot help it, the necessity is such that it is all one whether they will them or no, and the reason why they are done is from necessity only, and not from their wills. It is a very plain dictate of common sense that they are not at all to blame; there is no vice, fault, or moral evil, at all in the effect done, nor are they who are thus necessitated in anywise worthy to be punished, hated, or in the least disrespected, on that account.

In like manner, if things in themselves good and desirable are absolutely impossible with a natural impossibility, the universal reason of mankind teaches that this wholly and perfectly excuses persons in their not doing them.

And it is also a plain dictate of common sense that if the doing things in themselves good, or avoiding things in themselves evil, is not absolutely impossible with such a natural impossibility, but very difficult with a natural difficulty—that is a difficulty prior to, and not at all consisting in, will and inclination itself, and which would remain the same, let the inclination be what it will—then a person's neglect or omission is in some measure excused, though not wholly; his sin is less aggravated than if the thing to be done were easy. And if, instead of difficulty and hindrance, there be a contrary natural propensity in the state of things to the thing to be done, or effect to be brought to pass, abstracted from any consideration of the inclination of the heart, though the propensity be not so great as to amount to a natural necessity, yet being some approach to it, so that the doing the good thing be very much from this natural tendency in the state of things, and but little from a good inclination, then it is a dictate of common sense that there is so much the less virtue in what is done, and so it is less praiseworthy and rewardable. The reason is easy, namely, because such a natural propensity or tendency is an approach to natural necessity; and the greater the propensity, still so much the nearer is the approach to necessity. And, therefore, as natural necessity takes away or shuts out all virtue, so this propensity approaches to an abolition of virtue, that is, it diminishes it. And, on the other hand, natural difficulty in the state of things is an approach to natural impossibility; and as the latter, when it is complete and absolute, wholly takes away blame, so such difficulty takes away some blame or diminishes blame, and makes the thing done to be less worthy of punishment.

II.—Men in their first use of such phrases as these, must, cannot, cannot help it, cannot avoid it, necessary, unable, impossible, unavoidable, irresistible, &c., use them to signify a necessity of constraint or restraint, a natural *necessity* or impossibility, or some necessity that the will

has nothing to do in; which may be, whether men will or no; and which may be supposed to be just the same, let men's inclinations and desires be what they will. Such kind of terms in their original use, I suppose among all nations, are relative; carrying in their signification (as was before observed) a reference or respect to some contrary will, desire or endeavour, which, it is supposed, is, or may be, in the case. All men find, and begin to find in early childhood, that there are innumerable things that cannot be done which they desire to do, and innumerable things which they are averse to that must be; they cannot avoid them, they will be, whether they choose them or no. It is to express this necessity, which men so soon and so often find, and which so greatly and so early affects them in innumerable cases, that such terms and phrases are first formed; and it is to signify such a necessity that they are first used, and that they are most constantly used, in the common affairs of life; and not to signify any such metaphysical, speculative, and abstract notion, as that connection in the nature or course of things which is between the subject and the predicate of a proposition, and which is the foundation of the certain truth of that proposition; to signify which, they who employ themselves in philosophical inquiries into the first origin and metaphysical relations and dependencies of things, have borrowed these terms, fo rwant of others. But we grow up from our cradles in a use of such terms and phrases, entirely different from this, and carrying a sense exceeding diverse from that in which they are commonly used in the controversy between Arminians and Calvinists. And it being, as was said before, a dictate of the universal sense of mankind, evident to us as soon as we begin to think, that the necessity signified by these terms, in the sense in which we first learn them, does excuse persons, and free them from all fault or blame, hence our ideas of excusableness or faultlessness is tied to these terms and phrases by a strong habit, which is begun in childhood, as soon as we begin to speak, and grows up with us, and is strengthened by constant use and custom, the connection growing stronger and stronger.

The habitual connection which is in men's minds between blamelessness and those forementioned terms, must, cannot, unable, necessary, impossible, unavoidable, &c., becomes very strong, because as soon as ever men

begin to use reason and speech, they have occasion to excuse themselves, from the natural necessity signified by these terms, in numerous instances—"I cannot do it," "I could not help it;" and all mankind have constant and daily occasion to use such phrases in this sense, to excuse themselves and others in almost all the concerns of life, with respect to disappointments, and things that happen, which concern and effect us and others, that are hurtful, or disagreeable to us or them, or things desirable, that we or others fail of.

That a being accustomed to an union of different ideas, from early childhood, makes the habitual connection exceeding strong, as though such connection were owing to nature, is manifest in innumerable instances. It is altogether by such an habitual connection of ideas that men judge of the bigness or distance of the objects of sight from their appearance. Thus it is owing to such a connection early established, and growing up with a person, that he judges a mountain, which he sees at ten miles distance, to be bigger than his nose, or further off than the end of it. Having been used so long to join a considerable distance and magnitude with such an appearance, men imagine it is by a dictate of natural sense; whereas it would be quite otherwise with one that had his eyes newly opened, who had been born blind; he would have the same visible appearance, but natural sense would dictate no such thing concerning the magnitude or distance of what appeared.

III.—When men, after they have been so habituated to connect ideas of innocency or blamelessness with such terms, that the union seems to be the effect of mere nature, come to hear the same terms used, and learn to use them themselves, in the forementioned new and metaphysical sense, to signify quite another sort of necessity, which has no such kind of relation to a contrary supposable will and endeavour; the notion of plain and manifest blamelessness, by this means, is by a strong prejudice, insensibly and unwarily transferred to a case to which it by no means belongs; the change of the use of the terms, to a signification which is, very diverse, not being taken notice of, or adverted to. And there are several reasons why it is not.

Firstly—The terms, as used by philosophers, are not

very distinct and clear in their meaning; few use them in a fixed determined sense. On the contrary, their meaning is very vague and confused. Which is what commonly happens to the words used to signify things intellectual and moral, and to express what Mr. Locke calls mixed modes. If men had a clear and distinct understanding of what is intended by these metaphysical terms, they would be able more easily to compare them with their original and common sense, and so would not be so easily cheated by them. The minds of men are so easily led into delusion by no sort of terms in the world, as by words of this sort.

Secondly—The change of the signification of the terms is the more insensible, because the things signified, though indeed very different, yet do in some generals agree. In necessity, that which is vulgarly so called, there is a strong connection between the thing said to be necessary, and something antecedent to it, in the order of nature; so there is also in philosophical necessity. And though in both kinds of necessity the connection cannot be called by that name, with relation to an opposite will or endeavour, to which it is superior—which is the case in vulgar necessity—yet in both the connection is prior to will and endeavour, and so in some respect superior. In both kinds of necessity there is a foundation for some certainty of the proposition that affirms the event. The terms used being the same, and the things signified agreeing in these and some other general circumstances and the expressions as used by philosophers being not well defined, and so of obscure and loose signification; hence persons are not aware of the great difference; and the notions of innocence or faultlessness, which were so strongly associated with them, and were strictly united in their minds ever since they can remember, remain united with them still, as if the union were altogether natural and necessary; and they that go about to make a separation, seem to them to do great violence even to nature itself.

IV.—Another reason why it appears difficult to reconcile it with reason, that men should be blamed for that which is necessary with a moral necessity (which, as was observed before, is a species of philosophical necessity) is, that for want of due consideration, men inwardly entertain that apprehension that this necess-

sity may be against men's wills and sincere endeavours. They go away with that notion that men may truly will and wish and strive that it may be otherwise, but that invincible necessity stands in the way. And many think thus concerning themselves. Some that are wicked men think that they wish that they were good, that they loved God and holiness, but yet do not find that their wishes produce the effect. The reasons why men think thus are as follows:—Firstly, they find what may be called an indirect willingness to have a better will, in the manner before observed; for it is impossible, and a contradiction, to suppose the will to be directly and properly against itself. And they do not consider that this indirect willingness is entirely a different thing from properly willing the thing that is the duty and virtue required, and that there is no virtue in that sort of willingness which they have. They do not consider that the volitions which a wicked man may have that he loved God, are no acts of the will at all against the moral evil of not loving God, but only some disagreeable consequences; but the making the requisite distinction requires more care of reflection and thought than most men are used to. And men, through a prejudice in their own favour, are disposed to think well of their own desires and dispositions, and to account them good and virtuous, though their respect to virtue be only indirect and remote, and it is nothing at all that is virtuous that truly excites or terminates their inclinations. Secondly, another thing that insensibly leads and beguiles men into a supposition that this moral necessity or impossibility is, or may be, against men's wills and true endeavours, is the derivation and formation of the terms themselves that are often used to express it, which is such as seems directly to point to and hold this forth. Such words, for instance, as unable, unavoidable, impossible, irresistible, which carry a plain reference to a supposable power exerted, endeavours used, resistance made, in opposition to the necessity; and the persons that hear them, not considering nor suspecting but that they are used in their proper sense, that sense being, therefore, understood, there does naturally, and, as it were, necessarily, arise in their minds a supposition that it may be so indeed, that true desires and endeavours may take place, but that invincible necessity stands in the way and renders them vain and to no effect.

V.—Another thing which makes persons more ready to suppose it to be contrary to reason, that men should be exposed to punishments threatened to sin for doing those things which are morally necessary, or not doing those things morally impossible, is, that imagination strengthens the argument and adds greatly to the power and influence of the seeming reasons against it, from the greatness of that punishment. To allow that they may be justly exposed to a small punishment would not be so difficult; whereas, if there were any good reason in the case, if it were truly a dictate of reason that such necessity was inconsistent with faultiness or just punishment, the demonstration would be equally certain with respect to a small punishment, or any punishment at all, as a very great one; but it is not equally easy to the imagination. They that argue against the justice of damning men for those things that are thus necessary, seem to make their argument the stronger by setting forth the greatness of the punishment in strong expressions—that a man should be cast into eternal burnings, that he should be made to fry in hell to all eternity, for those things which he had no power to avoid, and was under a fatal, unfrustrable, invincible necessity of doing.

SECTION IV.

It is Agreeable to Common Sense, and the Natural Notions of Mankind, to suppose Moral Necessity to be Consistent with Praise and Blame, Reward and Punishment.

Whether the reasons that have been given why it appears difficult to some persons to reconcile with common sense the praising or blaming, rewarding or punishing, those things which are morally necessary, are thought satisfactory, or not, yet it most evidently appears by the following things, that if this matter be rightly understood, setting aside all delusion arising from the impropriety and ambiguity of terms, this is not at all inconsistent with the natural apprehensions of mankind, and that sense of things which is found everywhere in the common people, who are furthest from having their thoughts perverted from their natural channel by meta-

physical and philosophical subtilties; but, on the contrary, altogether agreeable to, and the very voice and dictate of, this natural and vulgar sense.

I.—This will appear if we consider what the vulgar notion of blameworthiness is. The idea which the common people through all ages and nations have of faultiness, I suppose to be plainly this—a person's being or doing wrong, with his own will and pleasure, containing these two things, firstly, his doing wrong, when he does as he pleases; secondly, his pleasures being wrong; or, in other words, perhaps more intelligibly expressing their notion, a person's having his heart wrong, and doing wrong from his heart. And this is the sum total of the matter.

The common people do not ascend up in their reflections and abstractions to the metaphysical sources, relations, and dependencies of things, in order to form their notion of faultiness or blameworthiness. They do not wait till they have decided by their refinings what first determines the will; whether it be determined by something extrinsic, or intrinsic; whether volition determines volition, or whether the understanding determines the will; whether there be any such thing as metaphysicians mean by contingence (if they have any meaning); whether there be a sort of a strange unaccountable sovereignty in the will, in the exercise of which, by its own sovereign acts, it brings to pass all its own sovereign acts. They do not take any part of their notion of fault or blame from the resolution of any such questions. If this were the case, there are multitudes that—yea, the far greater part of mankind, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand—would live and die without having any such notion as that of fault ever entering into their heads, or without so much as once having any conception that any body was to be either blamed or commended for anything. To be sure, it would be a long time before men came to have such notions. Whereas, it is manifest, they are some of the first notions that appear in children, who discover as soon as they can speak, or think, or act at all as rational creatures, a sense of desert. And, certainly, in forming their notion of it they make no use of metaphysics. All the ground they go upon consists in these two things, *experience* and a natural sensation of a certain fitness or

agreeableness which there is in uniting such moral evil as is above described, namely, a being or doing wrong with the will, and resentment in others, and pain inflicted on the person in whom this moral evil is; which natural sensation or sense is what we call by the name of conscience.

It is true the common people and children, in their notion of a faulty act or deed of any person, do suppose that it is the person's own act and deed; but this is all that belongs to what they understand by a thing's being a person's own deed or action—even that it is something done by him of choice. That some exercise or motion should begin of itself does not belong to their notion of an action or doing. If so, it would belong to their notion of it that it is something which is the cause of its own beginning; and that is as much as to say, that it is before it begins to be. Nor is their notion of an action some motion or exercise that begins accidentally, without any cause or reason; for that is contrary to one of the prime dictates of common sense, namely, that everything that begins to be, has some cause or reason why it is.

The common people, in their notion of a faulty or praiseworthy deed or work done by any one, do suppose that the man does it in the exercise of liberty; but then their notion of liberty is only a person's having opportunity of doing as he pleases. They have no notion of liberty consisting in the will's first acting, and so causing its own acts; and determining, and so causing its own determinations; or choosing, and so causing its own choice. Such a notion of liberty is what none have but those that have darkened their own minds with confused metaphysical speculation and abstruse and ambiguous terms. If a man is not restrained from acting as his will determines, or constrained to act otherwise, then he has liberty, according to common notions of liberty, without taking into the idea that grand contradiction of all, the determinations of a man's free will being the effects of the determinations of his free will. Nor have men commonly any notion of freedom consisting in indifference. For if so, then it would be agreeable to their notion that the greater indifference men act with, the more freedom they act with; whereas the reverse is true. He that in acting proceeds with the fullest inclination, does what he does with the greatest freedom, according to common

sense. And so far is it from being agreeable to common sense, that such liberty as consists in indifference is requisite to praise or blame, that, on the contrary, the dictate of every man's natural sense through the world is, that the further he is from being indifferent in his acting good or evil, and the more he does either with or without full and strong inclination, the more is he to be esteemed or abhorred, commended or condemned.

II.—If it were inconsistent with the common sense of mankind, that men should be either to be blamed or commended in any volitions they have or fail of in case of moral necessity or impossibility, then it would surely also be agreeable to the same sense and reason of mankind, that the nearer the case approaches to such a moral necessity or impossibility, either through a strong antecedent moral propensity on the one hand,* or a great antecedent opposition and difficulty on the other, the nearer does it approach to a being neither blameable nor commendable; so that acts exerted with such preceding propensity would be worthy of proportionably less praise; and when omitted, the act being attended with such difficulty, the omission would be worthy of the less blame. It is so, as was observed before, with natural necessity and impossibility, propensity and difficulty; as it is a plain dictate of the sense of all mankind that natural necessity and impossibility takes away all blame and praise; and, therefore, that the nearer the approach is to these through previous propensity or difficulty, so praise and blame are proportionably diminished. And if it were as much a dictate of common sense that moral necessity of doing, or impossibility of avoiding, takes away all praise and blame as that natural necessity or impossibility does this, then, by a perfect parity of reason, it would be as much the dictate of common sense that an approach to moral necessity of doing, or impossibility of avoiding, diminishes praise and blame, as that an approach to natural necessity and impossibility does so. It is equally the voice of common sense, that persons are excusable in part, in neglecting things difficult against their wills, as that they are excusable wholly in neglecting things impossible against their wills. And if it made no difference, whether the impossibility were natural and against the will, or

* It is here argued, on supposition, that not all propensity implies moral *necessity, but only* some very high degrees; which none will deny.

moral, lying in the will, with regard to excusableness, so neither would it make any difference whether the difficulty, or approach to necessity, be natural against the will, or moral, lying in the propensity of the will.

But it is apparent that the reverse of these things is true. If there be an approach to a moral necessity in a man's exertion of good acts of will, they being the exercise of a strong propensity to good, and a very powerful love to virtue, it is so far from being the dictate of common sense, that he is less virtuous, and the less to be esteemed, loved, and praised; that it is agreeable to the natural notious of all mankind that he is so much the better man, worthy of greater respect, and higher commendation. And the stronger the inclination is, and the nearer it approaches to necessity in that respect, or to impossibility of neglecting the virtuous act, or of doing a vicious one, still the more virtuous, and worthy of higher commendation. And, on the other hand, if a man exerts evil acts of mind—as for instance, acts of pride or malice, from a rooted and strong habit or principle of haughtiness and maliciousness, and a violent propensity of heart to such acts—according to the natural sense of all men, he is so far from being the less hateful and blameable on that account, that he is so much the more worthy to be detested and condemned by all that observe him.

Moreover, it is manifest that it is no part of the notion which mankind commonly have of a blameable or praiseworthy act of the will, that it is an act which is not determined by an antecedent bias or motive, but by the sovereign power of the will itself; because, if so, the greater hand such causes have in determining any acts of the will, so much the less virtuous or vicious would they be accounted, and the less hand, the more virtuous or vicious. Whereas the reverse is true; men do not think a good act to be the less praiseworthy for the agent's being much determined in it by a good inclination or a good motive, but the more. And if good inclination or motive has but little influence in determining the agent, they do not think his act so much the more virtuous, but the less. And so concerning evil acts, which are determined by evil motives or inclinations.

Yea, if it be supposed that good or evil dispositions are implanted in the hearts of men by nature itself, (which, it is certain, is vulgarly supposed in innumerable cases,) yet it is not commonly supposed that men are worthy of no praise or dispraise for such dispositions, although what is natural is undoubtedly necessary, nature being prior to all acts of the will whatsoever. Thus, for instance, if a man appears to be of a very haughty or malicious disposition, and is supposed to be so by his natural temper, it is no vulgar notion, no dictate of the common sense and apprehension of men, that such dispositions are no vices or moral evils, or that such persons are not worthy of disesteem, odium, and dishonour; or that the proud or malicious acts which flow from such natural dipositions, are worthy of no resentment. Yea, such vile natural dispositions, and the strength of them, will commonly be mentioned rather as an aggravation of the wicked acts that come from such a fountain, than an extenuation of them. Its being natural for men to act thus is often observed by men in the height of their indignation; they will say, "It is his very nature; he is of a vile natural temper; it is as natural to him to act so as it is to breathe; he cannot help serving the devil," &c. But it is not thus with regard to hurtful mischievous things that any are the subjects or occasions of by natural necessity against their inclinations. In such a case, the necessity, by the common voice of mankind, will be spoken of as a full excuse. Thus it is very plain that common sense makes a vast difference between these two kinds of necessity, as to the judgment it makes of their influence on the moral quality and desert of men's actions.

And these dictates of men's minds are so natural and necessary, that it may be very much doubted whether the Arminians themselves have ever got rid of them; yea, as to their greatest doctors, that have gone furthest in defence of their metaphysical notions of liberty, and have brought their arguments to their greatest strength, and, as they suppose, to a demonstration, against the consistence of virtue and vice with any necessity, it is to be questioned whether there is so much as one of them but that, if he suffered very much from the injurious acts of a man under the power of an invincible haughtiness and malignancy of temper, would *not*, from the forementioned natural sense of mind,

resent it far otherwise than if as great sufferings came upon him from the wind that blows, and fire that burns by natural necessity, and otherwise than he would if he suffered as much from the conduct of a man perfectly delirious; yea, though he first brought his distraction upon him some way by his own fault.

Some seem to disdain the distinction that we make between natural and moral necessity, as though it were altogether impertinent in this controversy; that which is necessary, say they, is necessary; it is that which must be, and cannot be prevented. And that which is impossible, is impossible, and cannot be done; and, therefore, none can be to blame for not doing it. And such comparisons are made use of as the commanding of a man to walk who has lost his legs, and condemning and punishing him for not obeying; inviting and calling upon a man, who is shut up in a strong prison, to come forth, &c. But in these things Arminians are very unreasonable. Let common sense determine whether there be not a great difference between those two cases; the one that of a man who has offended his prince, and is cast into prison; and after he has lain there awhile, the king comes to him, calls him to come forth to him, and tells him that if he will do so, and will fall down before him, and humbly beg his pardon, he shall be forgiven, and set at liberty, and also be greatly enriched, and advanced to honour; the prisoner heartily repents of the folly and wickedness of his offence against his prince, is thoroughly disposed to abase himself, and accept of the king's offer, but is confined by strong walls, with gates of brass, and bars of iron. The other case is that of a man who is of a very unreasonable spirit, of a haughty, ungrateful, wilful disposition, and, moreover, has been brought up in traitorous principles, and has his heart possessed with an extreme and inveterate enmity to his lawful sovereign; and for his rebellion is cast into prison, and lies long there, loaded with heavy chains, and in miserable circumstances. At length the compassionate prince comes to the prison, orders his chains to be knocked off, and his prison doors to be set wide open; calls to him, and tells him, if he will come forth to him, and fall down before him, acknowledge that he has treated him unworthily, and ask his forgiveness, he shall be forgiven, set at liberty, and set in a place of great dignity and profit in his court. But he is so stout and stomachful,

and full of haughty malignity, that he cannot be willing to accept the offer; his rooted strong pride and malice have perfect power over him, and, as it were, bind him, by binding his heart; the opposition of his heart has the mastery over him, having an influence on his mind far superior to the king's grace and condescension, and to all his kind offers and promises. Now, is it agreeable to common sense to assert and stand to it, that there is no difference between these two cases, as to any worthiness of blame in the prisoners, because, forsooth, there is a necessity in both, and the required act in each case is impossible? It is true a man's evil dispositions may be as strong and immovable as the bars of a castle; but who cannot see that when a man, in the latter case, is said to be unable to obey the command, the expression is used improperly, and not in the sense it has originally and in common speech? And that it may properly be said to be in the rebel's power to come out of prison, seeing he can easily do it if he pleases, though by reason of his vile temper of heart, which is fixed and rooted, it is impossible that it should please him?

Upon the whole, I presume there is no person of good understanding, who impartially considers the things which have been observed, but will allow that it is not evident from the dictates of the common sense, or natural notions, of mankind, that moral necessity is inconsistent with praise and blame. And, therefore, if the Arminians would prove any such inconsistency, it must be by some philosophical and metaphysical arguments, and not common sense.

There is a grand illusion in the pretended demonstration of Arminians from common sense. The main strength of all these demonstrations lies in that prejudice that arises through the insensible change of the use and meaning of such terms as liberty, able, unable, necessary, impossible, unavoidable, invincible, action, &c., from their original and vulgar sense, to a metaphysical sense entirely diverse, and the strong connection of the ideas of blamelessness, &c., with some of these terms, by a habit contracted and established while these terms were used in their first meaning. This prejudice and delusion is the foundation of all those positions they lay down as maxims, by which most of the *Scriptures*, which they allege in this controversy, are

resent it far otherwise than if as great sufferings came upon him from the wind that blows, and fire that burns by natural necessity, and otherwise than he would if he suffered as much from the conduct of a man perfectly delirious; yea, though he first brought his distraction upon him some way by his own fault.

Some seem to disdain the distinction that we make between natural and moral necessity, as though it were altogether impertinent in this controversy; that which is necessary, say they, is necessary; it is that which must be, and cannot be prevented. And that which is impossible, is impossible, and cannot be done; and, therefore, none can be to blame for not doing it. And such comparisons are made use of as the commanding of a man to walk who has lost his legs, and condemning and punishing him for not obeying; inviting and calling upon a man, who is shut up in a strong prison, to come forth, &c. But in these things Arminians are very unreasonable. Let common sense determine whether there be not a great difference between those two cases; the one that of a man who has offended his prince, and is cast into prison; and after he has lain there awhile, the king comes to him, calls him to come forth to him, and tells him that if he will do so, and will fall down before him, and humbly beg his pardon, he shall be forgiven, and set at liberty, and also be greatly enriched, and advanced to honour; the prisoner heartily repents of the folly and wickedness of his offence against his prince, is thoroughly disposed to abase himself, and accept of the king's offer, but is confined by strong walls, with gates of brass, and bars of iron. The other case is that of a man who is of a very unreasonable spirit, of a haughty, ungrateful, wilful disposition, and, moreover, has been brought up in traitorous principles, and has his heart possessed with an extreme and inveterate enmity to his lawful sovereign; and for his rebellion is cast into prison, and lies long there, loaded with heavy chains, and in miserable circumstances. At length the compassionate prince comes to the prison, orders his chains to be knocked off, and his prison doors to be set wide open; calls to him, and tells him, if he will come forth to him, and fall down before him, acknowledge that he has treated him unworthily, and ask his forgiveness, he shall be forgiven, set at liberty, and set in a place of great dignity and profit in his court. But he is so stout and stomachful,

never be worth the while to use any means or endeavours to obtain the one, and avoid the other, seeing no endeavours can alter the futurity of the event, which is become necessary by a connection already established.

But I desire that this matter may be fully considered, and that it may be examined with a thorough strictness whether it will follow that endeavours and means, in order to avoid or obtain any future thing, must be more in vain, on the supposition of such a connection of antecedents and consequents, than if the contrary be supposed.

For endeavours to be in vain is for them not to be successful; that is to say, for them not eventually to be the means of the thing aimed at; which cannot be, but in one of these two ways—either, firstly, that although the means are used, yet the event aimed at does not follow; or, secondly, if the event does follow, it is not because of the means, or from any connection or dependence of the event on the means; the event would have come to pass as well without the means, as with them. If either of these two things are the case, then the means are not properly successful, and are truly in vain. The successfulness or unsuccessfulness of means, in order to an effect, or their being in vain or not in vain, consists in those means being connected, or not connected, with the effect, in such a manner as this, namely, that the effect is with the means, and not without them; or, that the being of the effect is, on the one hand, connected with the means, and the want of the effect, on the other hand, is connected with the want of the means. If there be such a connection as this between means and end, the means are not in vain; the more there is of such a connection, the further they are from being in vain; and the less of such a connection, the more they are in vain.

Now, therefore, the question to be answered—in order to determine whether it follows from this doctrine of the necessary connection between foregoing things and consequent ones, that means used in order to any effect, are more in vain than they would be otherwise—is, whether it follows from it that there is less of the forementioned connection between means and effect; that *is whether* on the supposition of there being a real

and true connection between antecedent things and consequent ones, there must be less of a connection between means and effect than on the supposition of there being no fixed connection between antecedent things and consequent ones; and the very stating of this question is sufficient to answer it. It must appear to every one that will open his eyes, that this question cannot be affirmed without the grossest absurdity and inconsistence. Means are foregoing things, and effects are following things; and if there were no connection between foregoing things and following ones, there could be no connection between means and end; and so all means would be wholly vain and fruitless. For it is by virtue of some connection only that they become successful; it is some connection observed, or revealed, or otherwise known, between antecedent things and following ones, that is what directs in the choice of means. And if there were no such thing as an established connection, there could be no choice, as to means; one thing would have no more tendency to an effect than another; there would be no such thing as tendency in the case. All those things which are successful means of other things, do therein prove connected antecedents of them; and, therefore, to assert, that a a fixed connection between antecedents and consequents makes means vain and useless, or stands in the way to hinder the connection between means and end, is just as ridiculous as to say, that a connection between antecedents and consequents stands in the way to hinder a connection between antecedents and consequents.

Nor can any supposed connection of the succession or train of antecedents and consequents, from the very beginning of all things, the connection being made already sure and necessary, either by established laws of nature, or by these together with a decree of sovereign immediate interpositions of divine power, on such and such occasions, or any other way (if any other there be), I say, no such necessary connection of a series of antecedents and consequents can in the least tend to hinder, but that the means we use may belong to the series, and so may be some of those antecedents which are connected with the consequents we aim at, in the established course of things. Endeavours which we use are things that exist; and, therefore, they belong to the general chain of events, all the parts of which chain are

supposed to be connected; and so endeavours are supposed to be connected with some effects, or some consequent things or other. And certainly this does not hinder but that the events they are connected with may be those which we aim at and which we choose, because we judge them most likely to have a connection with those events from the established order and course of things which we observe, or from something in divine revelation.

Let us suppose a real and sure connection between a man's having his eyes open in the clear day light, with good organs of sight, and seeing; so that seeing is connected with his opening his eyes, and not seeing with his not opening his eyes; and also the like connection between such a man's attempting to open his eyes, and his actually doing it; the supposed established connection between these antecedents and consequents, let the connection be ever so sure and necessary, certainly does not prove that it is in vain for a man in such circumstances to attempt to open his eyes, in order to seeing; his aiming at that event, and the use of the means, being the effect of his will, does not break the connection or hinder the success.

So that the objection we are upon does not lie against the doctrine of the necessity of events by a certainty of connection and consequence; on the contrary, it is truly forcible against the Arminian doctrine of contingence and self-determination, which is inconsistent with such a connection. If there be no connection between those events wherein virtue and vice consist, and anything antecedent, then there is no connection between these events and any means or endeavours used in order to them; and if so, then those means must be in vain. The less there is of connection between foregoing things and following ones, so much the less there is between means and end, endeavours and success; and in the same proportion are means and endeavours ineffectual and in vain.

It will follow from Arminian principles, that there is no degree of connection between virtue or vice, and any foregoing event or thing; or, in other words, that the determination of the existence of virtue or vice does not in the least depend on the influence of anything *that comes* to pass antecedently, from which the deter-

mination of its existence is, as its cause, means, or ground, because, so far as it is so, it is not from self-determination; and, therefore, so far there is nothing of the nature of virtue or vice. And so it follows that virtue and vice are not at all, in any degree, dependent upon, or connected with, any foregoing event or existence, as its cause, ground, or means. And if so, then all foregoing means must be totally in vain.

Hence it follows, that there cannot, in any consistence with the Arminian scheme, be any reasonable ground of so much as a conjecture concerning the consequence of any means and endeavours, in order to escaping vice or obtaining virtue, or any choice or preference of means, as having a greater probability of success by some than others—either from any natural connection or dependence of the end on the means, or through any divine constitution or revealed way of God's bestowing or bringing to pass these things, in consequence of any means, endeavours, prayers, or deeds. Conjecture in this latter case depends on a supposition that God himself is the giver, or determining cause of the events sought; but if they depend on self-determination, then God is not the determining or disposing author of them; and if these things are not of his disposal, then no conjecture can be made from any revelation he has given concerning any way or method of his disposal of them.

Yea, on these principles, it will not only follow that men cannot have any reasonable ground of judgment or conjecture that their means and endeavours to obtain virtue or avoid vice will be successful, but they may be sure they will not; they may be certain that they will be in vain, and that if ever the thing which they seek comes to pass, it will not be at all owing to the means they use. For means and endeavours can have no effect at all, in order to obtain the end, but in one of these two ways—either, firstly, through a natural tendency and influence to prepare and dispose the mind more to virtuous acts, either by causing the disposition of the heart to be more in favour of such acts, or by bringing the mind more into the view of powerful motives and inducements; or, secondly, by putting persons more in the way of God's bestowment of the benefit. But neither of these can be the case. Not the latter—for, as has been just now observed, it does not consist with

the Arminian notion of self-determination, which they suppose essential to virtue, that God should be the bestower, or, which is the same thing, the determining, disposing author of virtue. Not the former—for natural influence and tendency supposes causality and connection, and that supposes necessity of event, which is inconsistent with Arminian liberty. A tendency of means, by biassing the heart in favour of virtue, or by bringing the will under the influence and power of motives in its determinations, are both inconsistent with Arminian liberty of will, consisting in indifference, and sovereign self-determination, as has been largely demonstrated.

But for the more full removal of this prejudice against that doctrine of necessity which has maintained, as though it tended to encourage a total neglect of all endeavours as vain, the following things may be considered:—

The question is not whether men may not thus improve this doctrine—we know that many true and wholesome doctrines are abused—but, whether the doctrine gives any just occasion for such an improvement, or whether, on the supposition of the truth of the doctrine, such a use of it would not be unreasonable. If any shall affirm that it would not, but that the very nature of the doctrine is such as gives just occasion for it, it must be on this supposition, namely, that such an invariable necessity of all things already settled must render the interposition of all means, endeavours, conclusions or actions of ours, in order to the obtaining any future end whatsoever, perfectly insignificant, because they cannot in the least alter or vary the course and series of things, in any event or circumstance, all being already fixed unalterably by necessity; and that, therefore, it is folly for men to use any means for any end, but their wisdom to save themselves the trouble of endeavours, and take their ease. No person can draw such an inference from this doctrine, and come to such a conclusion, without contradicting himself, and going counter to the very principles he pretends to act upon; for he comes to a conclusion, and takes a course, in order to an *end*, even his ease, or the saving himself from trouble; he *seeks* something future, and uses means in order to a *future thing*, even in his drawing up that conclusion,

that he will seek nothing, and use no means in order to anything future; he seeks his future ease and the benefit and comfort of indolence. If prior necessity, that determines all things, makes vain all actions or conclusions of ours in order to anything future, then it makes vain all conclusions and conduct of ours in order to our future ease. The measure of our ease, with the time, manner, and every circumstance of it, is already fixed by all-determining necessity as much as anything else. If he says within himself, "What future happiness or misery I shall have is already in effect determined by the necessary course and connection of things, therefore I will save myself the trouble of labour and diligence, which cannot add to my determined degree of happiness, or diminish my misery, but will take my ease and will enjoy the comfort of sloth and negligence." Such a man contradicts himself; he says the measure of his future happiness and misery is already fixed, and he will not try to diminish the one, nor add to the other; but yet in his very conclusion he contradicts this, for he takes up this conclusion, to add to his future happiness, by the ease and comfort of his negligence, and to diminish his future trouble and misery by saving himself the trouble of using means and taking pains.

Therefore persons cannot reasonably make this improvement of the doctrine of necessity, that they will go into a voluntary negligence of means for their own happiness. For the principles they must go upon, in order to this, are inconsistent with their making any improvement at all of the doctrine; for to make some improvement of it, is to be influenced by it, to come to some voluntary conclusion, in regard to their own conduct, with some view or aim; but this, as has been shown, is inconsistent with the principles they pretend to act upon. In short, the principles are such as cannot be acted upon at all, or in any respect, consistently. And, therefore, in every pretence of acting upon them, or making any improvement at all of them, there is a self-contradiction.

As to that objection against the doctrine which I have endeavoured to prove, that it makes men no more than mere machines, I would say, that notwithstanding this doctrine, man is entirely, perfectly, and unspeakably different from a mere machine, in that he has reason

and understanding, and has a faculty of will, and so is capable of volition and choice, and in that his will is guided by the dictates or views of his understanding, and in that his external actions and behaviour, and in many respects also his thoughts, and the exercises of his mind, are subject to his will, so that he has liberty to act according to his choice, and do what he pleases; and, by means of these things, is capable of moral habits and moral acts, such inclinations and actions as, according to the common sense of mankind, are worthy of praise, esteem, love, and reward; or, on the contrary, of disesteem, detestation, indignation, and punishment.

In these things is all the difference from mere machines, as to liberty and agency, that would be any perfection, dignity, or privilege, in any respect; all the difference that can be desired, and all that can be conceived of, and, indeed all that the pretensions of the Arminians themselves come to, as they are forced often to explain themselves. Though their explications overthrow and abolish the things asserted, and pretended to be explained; for they are forced to explain a self-determining power of will by a power in the soul to determine as it chooses or wills; which comes to no more than this, that a man has a power of choosing, and in many instances, can do as he chooses. Which is quite a different thing from that contradiction, his having power of choosing his first act of choice in the case.

Or if their scheme makes any other difference than this, between men and machines, it is for the worse; it is so far from supposing men to have a dignity and privilege above machines, that it makes the manner of their being determined still more unhappy. Whereas machines are guided by an understanding cause, by the skilful hand of the workman or owner; the will of man is left to the guidance of nothing, but absolute blind contingence.

SECTION VI.

CONCERNING THAT OBJECTION AGAINST THE DOCTRINE WHICH HAS BEEN MAINTAINED, THAT IT AGREES WITH THE STOICAL DOCTRINE OF FATE, AND THE OPINIONS OF MR. HOBBES.

WHEN Calvinists oppose the Arminian notion of the freedom of will, and contingence of volition, and insist that there are no acts of the will, nor any other events whatsoever, but what are attended with some kind of necessity, their opposers cry out on them, as agreeing with the ancient Stoics in their doctrine of fate, and with Mr. Hobbes in his opinion of necessity.

It would not be worth while to take notice of so impertinent an objection, had it not been urged by some of the chief Arminian writers. There were many important truths maintained by the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, and especially the Stoics, that are never the worse for being held by them The Stoic philosophers, by the general agreement of Christian divines, and even Arminian divines, were the greatest, wisest, and most virtuous of all the heathen philosophers; and in their doctrine and practice came the nearest to Christianity of any of their sects. How frequently are the sayings of these philosophers, in many of the writings and sermons, even of Arminian divines, produced, not as arguments of the falseness of the doctrines which they delivered, but as a confirmation of some of the greatest truths of the Christian religion, relating to the unity and perfections of the godhead, a future state, the duty and happiness of mankind, &c., as observing how the light of nature and reason in the wisest and best of the heathen, harmonised with and confirms the Gospel of Jesus Christ

And it is very remarkable concerning Dr. Whitby, that although he alleges the agreement of the Stoics with us, wherein he supposes they maintained the like doctrine with us, as an argument against the truth of our doctrine, yet this very Dr. Whitby alleges the agreement of the Stoics with the Arminians, wherein

he supposes they taught the same doctrine with them, as an argument for the truth of their doctrine.* So that when the Stoics agree with them, this, it seems, is a confirmation of their doctrine, and a confutation of ours, as showing that our opinions are contrary to the natural sense and common reason of mankind; nevertheless, when the Stoics agree with us, it argues no such thing in our favour; but, on the contrary, is a great argument against us, and shows our doctrine to be heathenish.

It is observed by some Calvinistic writers, that the Arminians symbolize with the Stoics in some of those doctrines wherein they are opposed by the Calvinists; particularly in their denying an original, innate, total corruption and depravity of heart; and in what they held of man's ability to make himself truly virtuous and conformed to God, and in some other doctrines.

It may be further observed, it is certainly no better objection against our doctrine, that it agrees in some respects with the doctrine of the ancient Stoic philosophers, than it is against theirs, wherein they differ from us, that it agrees in some respects with the opinions of the very worst of the heathen philosophers, the followers of Epicurus, that father of atheism and licentiousness, and with the doctrine of the Sadducees and Jesuits.

I am not much concerned to know precisely what the ancient Stoic philosophers held concerning fate, in order to determine what is truth, as though it were a sure way to be in the right, to take good heed to differ from them. It seems that they differed among themselves, and probably the doctrine of fate, as maintained by most of of them, was in some respects erroneous. But whatever their doctrine was, if any of them held such a fate as is repugnant to any liberty consisting in our doing as we please, I utterly deny such a fate. If they held any such fate as is not consistent with the common and universal notions that mankind have of liberty, activity, moral agency, virtue, and vice, I disclaim any such thing, and think I have demonstrated that the scheme I maintain is no such scheme. If the Stoics by fate meant anything

* *Whitby on the Five Points*, Third Edit. pages 325, 326, and 327.

of such a nature as can be supposed to stand in the way of the advantage and benefit of the use of means and endeavours, or makes it less worth the while for men to desire and seek after anything wherein their virtue and happiness consists, I hold no doctrine that is clogged with any such inconvenience, any more than any other scheme whatsoever, and by no means so much as the Arminian scheme of contingence, as has been shown. If they held any such doctrine of universal fatality as is inconsistent with any kind of liberty—that is or can be any perfection, dignity, privilege or benefit, or anything desirable, in any respect, for any intelligent creature, or indeed with any liberty that is possible or conceivable—I embrace no such doctrine. If they held any such doctrine of fate as is inconsistent with the world's being in all things subject to the disposal of an intelligent wise agent, that presides, not as the soul of the world, but as the sovereign lord of the universe, governing all things by proper will, choice, and design, in the exercise of the most perfect liberty conceivable, without subjection to any constraint, or being properly under the power or influence of anything before, above, or without himself, I wholly renounce any such doctrine.

As to Mr. Hobbes's maintaining the same doctrine concerning necessity, I confess, it happens I never read Mr. Hobbes. Let his opinion be what it will, we need not reject all truth which is demonstrated by clear evidence merely because it was once held by some bad man. This great truth, that Jesus is the Son of God, was not spoiled because it was once and again proclaimed with a loud voice by the devil. If truth is so defiled because it is spoken by the mouth, or written by the pen, of some ill-minded mischievous man, that it must never be received, we shall never know when we hold any of the most precious and evident truths by a sure tenure. And if Mr. Hobbes has made a bad use of this truth, that is to be lamented; but the truth is not to be thought worthy of rejection on that account. It is common for the corruptions of the hearts of evil men, to abuse the best things to vile purposes.

I might also take notice of its having been observed that the Arminians agree with Mr. Hobbes * in many

* Dr. Gill, in his answer to Dr. Whitby, vol. III., pages 182, &c.

more things than the Calvinists. As in what he is said to hold concerning original sin, in denying the necessity of supernatural illumination, in denying infused grace, in denying the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and other things.

SECTION VII.

Concerning the Necessity of the Divine Will.

Some may possibly object against what has been supposed of the absurdity and inconsistence of a self-determining power in the will, and the impossibility of its being otherwise than that the will should be determined in every case by some motive, and by a motive which, as it stands in the view of the understanding, is of superior strength to any appearing on the other side; that if these things are true, it will follow, that not only the will of created minds, but the will of God himself, is necessary in all its determinations. Concerning which says the author of the Essay on the Freedom of Will in God and in the Creature, (pages 85 and 86,) "What strange doctrine is this, contrary to all our ideas of the dominion of God? Does it not destroy the glory of his liberty of choice, and take away from the creator and governor and benefactor of the world, that most free and sovereign agent, all the glory of this sort of freedom? Does it not seem to make him a kind of mechanical medium of fate, and introduce Mr. Hobbes's doctrine of fatality and necessity into all things that God hath to do with? Does it not seem to represent the blessed God, as a being of vast understanding, as well as power and efficiency, but still to leave him without a will to choose among all the objects within his view? In short, it seems to make the blessed God a sort of almighty minister of fate, under its universal and supreme influence, as it was the professed sentiment of some of the ancients, that fate was above the Gods."

This is declaiming, rather than arguing; and an application to men's imaginations and prejudices, rather than to mere reason. But I would calmly endeavour to consider whether there be any reason in this frightful *representation*. But before I enter upon a particular

consideration of the matter, I would observe this—That it is reasonable to suppose it should be much more difficult to express or conceive things according to exact metaphysical truth, relating to the nature and manner of the existence of things in the divine understanding and will, and the operation of these faculties, if I may so call them, of the divine mind, than in the human mind, which is infinitely more within our view, and nearer to a proportion to the measure of our comprehension, and more commensurate to the use and import of human speech. Language is, indeed, very deficient in regard of terms to express precise truth concerning our own minds, and their faculties and operations. Words were first formed to express external things; and those that are applied to express things internal and spiritual are almost all borrowed, and used in a sort of figurative sense. Whence they are most of them attended with a great deal of ambiguity and unfixedness in their signification, occasioning innumerable doubts, difficulties, and confusions in inquiries and controversies about things of this nature. But language is much less adapted to express things in the mind of the incomprehensible Deity precisely as they are.

We find a great deal of difficulty in conceiving exactly of the nature of our own souls. And notwithstanding all the progress which has been made in past and present ages in this kind of knowledge, whereby our metaphysics, as it relates to these things, is brought to greater perfection than once it was, yet here is still work enough left for future inquiries and researches, and room for progress still to be made, for many ages and generations. But we had need to be infinitely able metaphysicians to conceive with clearness, according to strict, proper, and perfect truth, concerning the nature of the divine essence, and the modes of the action and operation of the powers of the divine mind.

And it may be noted particularly, that though we are obliged to conceive of some things in God as consequent and dependent on others, and of some things pertaining to the divine nature and will as the foundation of others, and so before others in the order of nature; as, we must conceive of the knowledge and holiness of God as prior in the order of nature to his happiness; the perfection of his understanding, as the foundation of his wise pur-

poses and decrees; the holiness of his nature, as the cause and reason of his holy determinations. And yet when we speak of cause and effect, antecedent and consequent, fundamental and dependent, determining and determined, in the first being, who is self-existent, independent, of perfect and absolute simplicity and immutability, and the first cause of all things, doubtless there must be less propriety in such representations than when we speak of derived dependent beings, who are compounded, and liable to perpetual mutation and succession.

Having premised this, I proceed to observe concerning the forementioned author's exclamation, about the necessary determination of God's will, in all things, by what he sees to be fittest and best—That all the seeming force of such objections and exclamations must arise from an imagination, that there is some sort of privilege or dignity in being without such a moral necessity as will make it impossible to do any other than always choose what is wisest and best; as though there were some disadvantage, meanness, and subjection in such a necessity; a thing by which the will was confined, kept under, and held in servitude by something, which, as it were, maintained a strong and invincible power and dominion over it, by bonds that held God fast, and that he could by no means deliver himself from. Whereas this must be all mere imagination and delusion. It is no disadvantage or dishonour to a being, necessarily to act in the most excellent and happy manner, from the necessary perfection of his own nature. This argues no imperfection, inferiority, or dependence, nor any want of dignity, privilege, or ascendency.* It is not incon-

* "It might have been objected with much more plausibleness that the supreme cause cannot be free, because he must needs do always what is best in the whole. But this would not at all serve Spinoza's purpose; for this is a necessity, not of nature and fate, but of fitness and wisdom—a necessity consistent with the greatest freedom, and most perfect choice. For the only foundation of this necessity is such an unalterable rectitude of will and perfection of wisdom, as makes it impossible for a wise being to act foolishly."—Clark's Demonstration of the Being and Attribute of God, Sixth Edition, page 64.

"Though God is a most perfectly free agent, yet he cannot but do always what is best and wisest on the whole. The reasonis evident, because perfect wisdom and goodness are as steady and certain principles of action as necessity itself; and an infinitely wise and good being, indued with the most perfect liberty, can no more choose to act in contradiction to wisdom and goodness, than a necessary agent can act contrary to the necessity by which it is *acted*, it being as great an absurdity and impossibility in choice for infinite

sistent with the absolute, and most perfect sovereignty of God. The sovereignty of God is his ability and authority to do whatever pleases him; whereby he doth

wisdom to choose to act unwisely, or infinite goodness to choose what is not good, as it would be in nature for absolute necessity to fail of producing its necessary effect. There was, indeed, no necessity in nature that God should at first create such beings as he has created, or indeed any being at all, because he is in himself infinitely happy and all-sufficient. There was also no necessity in nature that he should preserve and continue things in being after they were created, because he would be self-sufficient without their continuance, as he was before their creation. But it was fit and wise and good that infinite wisdom should manifest, and infinite goodness communicate itself; and, therefore, it was necessary, in the sense of necessity I am now speaking of, that things should be made at such a time, and continued so long, and, indeed, with various perfections in such degrees, as infinite wisdom and goodness saw it wisest and best that they should."—Ibid, pages 112 and 113.

"It is not a fault, but a perfection, of our nature, to desire, will, and act according to the last result of a fair examination. This is so far from being a restraint or diminution of freedom that it is the very improvement and benefit of it; it is not an abridgement, it is the end and use of our liberty; and the further we are removed from such a determination, the nearer we are to misery and slavery. A perfect indifference in the mind, not determinable by its last judgment of the good or evil that is thought to attend its choice, would be so far from being an advantage and excellency of any intellectual nature, that it would be as great an imperfection as the want of indifferency to act or not to act, till determined by the will, would be an imperfection on the other side. It is as much a perfection that desire, or the power of preferring, should be determined by good, as that the power of acting should be determined by the will; and the more certain such determination is, the greater the perfection. Nay, were we determined by anything but the last result of our own minds judging of the good or evil of any action, we were not free; the very end of our freedom being that we might attain the good we choose; and, therefore, every man is brought under a necessity by his constitution, as an intelligent being, to be determined in willing by his own thought and judgment what is best for him to do; else he would be under the determination of some other than himself, which is want of liberty. And to deny that a man's will in every determination follows his own judgment is to say that a man wills and acts for an end that he would not have, at the same time that he wills and acts for it. For if he prefers it in his present thoughts before any other, it is plain he then thinks better of it, and would have it before any other; unless he can have and not have it, will and not will it, at the same time—a contradiction too manifest to be admitted. If we look upon those superior beings above us, who enjoy perfect happiness, we shall have reason to judge that they are more steadily determined in their choice of good than we, and yet we have no reason to think they are less happy, or less free, than we are. And if it were fit for such poor finite creatures as we are to pronounce what infinite wisdom and goodness could do, I think we might say that God himself cannot choose what is not good. The freedom of the Almighty hinders not his being determined by what is best. But to give a right view of this mistaken part of liberty, let me ask—Would any one be a changeling because he is less determined by wise determination than a wise man? Is it worth the name of freedom to be at liberty to play the fool, and draw shame and misery upon a man's self? If to break loose from the conduct of reason, and to want that restraint of examination and judgment that keeps us from doing or choosing the worse, be liberty, true liberty, madmen and fools are the only free men. Yet, I think, nobody would choose to be mad for the sake of such liberty, but he that is mad already."—Locke on the Human Understanding, Vol. I., Seventh Edition, pages 215 and 216.

"This being, having all things always necessarily in view, must always

according to his will in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou?

The following things belong to the sovereignty of God, namely, firstly, supreme, universal, and infinite power, whereby he is able to do what he pleases, without control, without any confinement of that power, without any subjection in the least measure to any other power, and so without hindrance or restraint, that it should be either impossible, or at all difficult, for him to accomplish his will, and without any dependence of his power on any other power, from whence it should be derived, or which it should stand in any need of; so far from this, that all other power is derived from him, and is absolutely dependent on him. Secondly, that he has supreme authority; absolute and most perfect right to do what he wills, without subjection to any superior authority, or any derivation of authority from any other, or limitation by any distinct independent authority, either superior, equal, or inferior, he being the head of all dominion, and fountain of all authority; and also without restraint by any obligation, implying either subjection, derivation, or dependence, or proper limitation. Thirdly, that his will is supreme, underived, and independent on anything without himself; being in everything determined by his own counsel, having no other rule but his

and eternally will according to his infinite comprehension of things, that is, must will all things that are best and wisest to be done. There is no getting free of this consequence. If it can will at all, it must will this way. To be capable of knowing and not capable of willing, is not to be understood; and to be capable of willing otherwise than what is wisest and best, contradicts that knowledge which is infinite. Infinite knowledge must direct the will without error. Here then is the origin of moral necessity, and that is really of freedom. Perhaps it may be said, when the divine will is determined from the consideration of the eternal aptitudes of things, it is as necessarily determined as if it were physically impelled, if that were possible. But it is unskilfulness to suppose this an objection. The great principle is once established, namely, that the divine will is determined by the eternal reason and aptitudes of things, instead of being physically impelled; and after that, the more strong and necessary this determination is, the more perfect the Deity must be allowed to be; it is this that makes him an amiable and adorable being, whose will and power are constantly, immutably determined by the consideration of what is wisest and best, instead of a surd being with power, but without discerning and reason. It is the beauty of this necessity that it is strong as fate itself, with all the advantage of reason and goodness. It is strange to see men contend that the Deity is not free, because he is necessarily rational, immutably good, and wise, when a man is allowed still the more perfect being, the more fixedly and constantly his will is determined by reason and truth." —Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul, Third Edition, Vol. II., *pages 403* and 404.

own wisdom; his will not being subject to, or restrained by, the will of any other, and other's wills being perfectly subject to his. Fourthly, that his wisdom, which determines his will, is supreme, perfect, underived, self-sufficient, and independent; so that it may be said, (as in Isai. xl., 14,) "With whom took he counsel? And who instructed him and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?" There is no other divine sovereignty but this; and this is properly absolute sovereignty; no other is desirable, nor would any other be honorable or happy; and, indeed, there is no other conceivable or possible. It is the glory and greatness of the divine sovereignty that God's will is determined by his own infinite all-sufficient wisdom in everything; and in nothing at all is either directed by any inferior wisdom, or by no wisdom; whereby it would become senseless arbitrariness, determining and acting without reason, design, or end.

If God's will is steadily and surely determined in everything by supreme wisdom, then it is in everything necessarily determined to that which is most wise. And certainly it would be a disadvantage and indignity to be otherwise. For if the divine will was not necessarily determined to that which in every case is wisest and best, it must be subject to some degree of undesigning contingence, and so, in the same degree, liable to evil. To suppose the divine will liable to be carried hither and thither at random, by the uncertain wind of blind contingence, which is guided by no wisdom, no motive, no intelligent dictate whatsoever, (if any such thing were possible,) would certainly argue a great degree of imperfection and meanness, infinitely unworthy of the Deity. If it be a disadvantage for the divine will to be attended with this moral necessity, then the more free from it, and the more left at random, the greater dignity and advantage. And, consequently, to be perfectly free from the direction of understanding, and universally and entirely left to senseless unmeaning contingence, to act absolutely at random, would be the supreme glory.

It no more argues any dependence of God's will, that his supremely wise volition is necessary, than it argues a dependence of his being, that his existence is necessary. If it be something too low for the Supreme Being

to have his will determined by moral necessity, so as necessarily, in every case, to will in the highest degree holily and happily, then why is it not also something too low for him to have his existence, and the infinite perfection of his nature, and his infinite happiness, determined by necessity? It is no more to God's dishonour to be necessarily wise than to be necessarily holy. And if neither of them be to his dishonour, then it is not to his dishonour necessarily to act holily and wisely. And if it be not dishonourable to be necessarily holy and wise, in the highest possible degree, no more is it mean or dishonourable necessarily to act holily and wisely in the highest possible degree; or, which is the same thing, to do that, in every case, which above all other things is wisest and best.

The reason why it is not dishonourable to be necessarily most holy is, because holiness in itself is an excellent and honourable thing. For the same reason, it is no dishonour to be necessarily most wise, and in every case to act most wisely, or do the thing which is the wisest of all; for wisdom is also in itself excellent and honourable.

The forementioned author of the Essay on the Freedom of Will, &c., as has been observed, represents that doctrine of the divine will's being in every thing necessarily determined by superior fitness, as making the blessed God a kind of almighty minister and mechanical medium of fate; and he insists, (pages 93 and 94,) that this moral necessity and impossibility is in effect the same thing with physical and natural necessity and impossibility; and in pages 54 and 55 he says, "The scheme which determines the will always and certainly by the understanding, and the understanding by the appearance of things, seems to take away the true nature of vice and virtue. For the sublimest of virtues, and the vilest of vices, seem rather to be matters of fate and necessity, flowing naturally and necessarily from the existence, the circumstances, and present situation of persons and things; for this existence and situation necessarily makes such an appearance to the mind; from this appearance flows a necessary perception and judgment concerning these things; this judgment necessarily determines the will; and thus by this chain of

necessary causes, virtue and vice would lose their nature, and become natural ideas and necessary things, instead of moral and free actions."

And yet this same author allows (pages 30 and 31) that a perfectly wise being will constantly and certainly choose what is most fit; and says, (pages 102 and 103,) "I grant, and always have granted, that wheresoever there is such an antecedent superior fitness of things, God acts according to it, so as never to contradict it; and particularly in all his judicial proceedings, as a governor, and distributor of rewards and punishments." Yea, he says expressly, (page 42,) "That it is not possible for God to act otherwise than according to this fitness and goodness in things."

So that, according to this author, putting these several passages of his essay together, there is no virtue, nor anything of a moral nature, in the most sublime and glorious acts and exercises of God's holiness, justice, and faithfulness; and he never does anything which is in itself supremely worthy, and, above all other things, fit and excellent, but only as a kind of mechanical medium of fate; and in what he does, as the judge and moral governor of the world, he exercises no moral excellency; exercising no freedom in these things, because he acts by moral necessity, which is in effect the same with physical or natural necessity; and, therefore, he only acts by an Hobbistical fatality; as a being, indeed, of vast understanding, as well as power and efficiency, (as he said before,) but without a will to choose, being a kind of almighty minister of fate, acting under its supreme influence. For he allows, that in all these things God's will is determined constantly and certainly by a superior fitness, and that it is not possible for him to act otherwise. And if these things are so, what glory or praise belongs to God for doing holily and justly, or taking the most fit, holy, wise, and excellent course, in any one instance? Whereas, according to the Scriptures, and also the common sense of mankind, it does not in the least derogate from the honour of any being, that, through the moral perfection of his nature, he necessarily acts with supreme wisdom and holiness; but, on the contrary, his praise is the greater; herein consists the height of his glory.

The same author (page 56) supposes, that herein appears the excellent character of a wise and good man, that though he can choose contrary to the fitness of things, yet he does not, but suffers himself to be directed by fitness, and that in this conduct he imitates the blessed God. And yet he supposes it is contrariwise with the blessed God; not that he suffers himself to be directed by fitness, when he can choose contrary to the fitness of things, but that he cannot choose contrary to the fitness of things; as he says (page 42) that it is not possible for God to act otherwise than according to this fitness, where there is any fitness or goodness of things; yea, he supposes, (page 31,) that if a man were perfectly wise and good, he could not do otherwise than be constantly and certainly determined by the fitness of things.

One thing more I would observe, before I conclude this section, and that is, that if it derogates nothing from the glory of God to be necessarily determined by superior fitness in some things, then neither does it to be thus determined in all things, from anything in the nature of such necessity, as at all detracting from God's freedom, independence, absolute supremacy, or any dignity or glory of his nature, state, or manner of acting, or as implying any infirmity, restraint, or subjection. And if the thing be such as well consists with God's glory, and has nothing tending at all to detract from it, then we need not be afraid of ascribing it to God in too many things, lest thereby we should detract from God's glory too much.

SECTION VIII.

Some further Objections against the Moral Necessity of God's Volitions considered.

The author last cited, as has been observed, owns that God, being perfectly wise, will constantly and certainly choose what appears most fit, where there is a superior fitness and goodness in things, and that it is not possible for him to do otherwise. So that it is in effect *confessed*, that in those things where there is any real

preferableness it is no dishonour, nothing in any respect unworthy of God, for him to act from necessity, notwithstanding all that can be objected from the agreement of such a necessity with the fate of the Stoics, and the necessity maintained by Mr. Hobbes. From which it will follow, that if it were so, that in all the different things, among which God chooses, there were evermore a superior fitness or preferableness on one side, then it would be no dishonour, or anything in any respect unworthy or unbecoming of God, for his will to be necessarily determined in every thing. And if this be allowed, it is a giving-up entirely the argument, from the unsuitableness of such a necessity to the liberty, supremacy, independence, and glory of the divine being, and a resting the whole weight of the affair on the decision of another point wholly diverse—namely, whether it be so indeed, that in all the various possible things which are in God's view, and may be considered as capable objects of his choice, there is not evermore a preferableness in one thing above another. This is denied by this author, who supposes that in many instances, between two or more possible things, which come within the view of the divine mind, there is a perfect indifference and equality as to fitness, or tendency to attain any good end which God can have in view, or to answer any of his designs. Now, therefore, I would consider whether this be evident.

The arguments brought to prove this are of two kinds. Firstly, it is urged that in many instances we must suppose there is absolutely no difference between various possible objects of choice, which God has in view; and, secondly, that the difference between many things is so inconsiderable, or of such a nature, that it would be unreasonable to suppose it to be of any consequence, or to suppose that any of God's wise designs would not be answered in one way as well as the other.

Therefore, the first thing to be considered is, whether there are any instances wherein there is a perfect likeness, and absolutely no difference, between different objects of choice that are proposed to the divine understanding.

And here, in the first place, it may be worthy to be considered, whether the contradiction there is in the terms of the question proposed, does not give reason to

suspect that there is an inconsistence in the thing supposed. It is inquired whether different objects of choice may not be absolutely without difference? If they are absolutely without difference, then how are they different objects of choice? If there be absolutely no difference in any respect, then there is no variety or distinction; for distinction is only by some difference. And if there be no variety among proposed objects of choice, then there is no opportunity for variety of choice, or difference of determination. For that determination of a thing which is not different in any respect, is not a different determination, but the same. That this is no quibble may appear more fully anon.

The arguments, to prove that the most high, in some instances, chooses to do one thing, rather than another, where the things themselves are perfectly without difference, are two.

Firstly—That the various parts of infinite time and space, absolutely considered, are perfectly alike, and do not differ at all one from another; and that, therefore, when God determined to create the world in such a part of infinite duration and space, rather than others, he determined and preferred among various objects, between which there was no preferableness, and absolutely no difference.

Answer I.—This objection supposes an infinite length of time before the world was created, distinguished by successive parts, properly and truly so; or a succession of limited and unmeasurable periods of time, following one another, in an infinitely long series; which must needs be a groundless imagination. The eternal duration which was before the world, being only the eternity of God's existence, which is nothing else but his immediate, perfect, and invariable possession of the whole of his unlimited life, together and at once, *vitæ interminabilis, tota, simul, et perfecta possessio;* which is so generally allowed, that I need not stand to demonstrate it.*

* "If all created beings were taken away, all possibility of any mutation or succession of one thing to another would appear to be also removed. Abstract succession in eternity is scarce to be understood. What is it that succeeds? One minute to another perhaps, *velut unda supervenit undam.* But when we imagine this, we fancy that the minutes are things separately *existing. This* is the common notion; and yet it is a manifest prejudice.

So this objection supposes an extent of space beyond the limits of the creation, of an infinite length, breadth, and depth, truly and properly distinguished into different measurable parts, limited at certain stages, one beyond another, in an infinite series; which notion of absolute and infinite space is doubtless as unreasonable as that now mentioned, of absolute and infinite duration. It is as improper to imagine that the immensity and omnipresence of God is distinguished by a series of miles and leagues, one beyond another, as that the infinite duration of God is distinguished by months and years, one after another. A diversity and order of distinct parts, limited by certain periods, is as conceivable, and does as naturally obtrude itself on our imagination, in one case as the other; and there is equal reason in each case to suppose that our imagination deceives us. It is equally improper to talk of months and years of the divine existence, and mile-squares of deity; and we equally deceive ourselves when we talk of the world's being differently fixed with respect to either of these sorts of measures. I think we know not what we mean, if we say the world might have been differently placed from what it is in the broad expanse of infinity; or, that it might have been differently fixed in the long line of eternity; and all arguments and objections which are built on the imaginations we are apt to have of infinite extension or duration, are buildings founded on shadows, or castles in the air.

Time is nothing but the existence of created successive beings, and eternity the necessary existence of the deity. Therefore, if this necessary being hath no change or succession in his nature, his existence must of course be unsuccessive. We seem to commit a double oversight in this case: first, we find succession in the necessary nature and existence of the deity himself; which is wrong, if the reasoning above be conclusive. And then we ascribe this succession to eternity, considered abstractedly from the eternal being; and suppose it, one knows not what, a thing subsisting by itself, and flowing, one minute after another. This is the work of pure imagination, and contrary to the reality of things. Hence the common metaphorical expressions, time runs a-pace, let us lay hold on the present minute, and the like. The philosophers themselves mislead us by their illustrations; they compare eternity to the motion of a point running on for ever, and making a traceless infinite line. Here the point is supposed a thing actually subsisting, representing the present minute; and then they ascribe motion or succession to it: that is, they ascribe motion to a mere nonentity, to illustrate to us a successive eternity made up of finite successive parts. If once we allow an all-perfect mind, which hath an eternal, immutable, and infinite comprehension of all things, always, (and allow it we must) the distinction of past and future vanishes with respect to such a mind. In a word, if we proceed, step by step, as above, the eternity or existence of the deity will appear to be *vitæ interminabilis, tota, simul, et perfecta possessio;* how much soever this may have been a paradox hitherto."--Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul. Vol. II. pages 409, 410, 411, Third Edition.

Secondly— The second argument to prove that the most high wills one thing rather than another, without any superior fitness or preferableness in the thing preferred, is God's actually placing in different parts of the world particles or atoms of matter that are perfectly equal and alike. The forementioned author says, (page 78, &c.,) "If one would descend to the minute specific particles of which different bodies are composed, we should see abundant reason to believe that there are thousands of such little particles or atoms of matter which are perfectly equal and alike, and could give no distinct determination to the will of God where to place them." He there instances in particles of water, of which there are such immense numbers, which compose the rivers and oceans of this world, and the infinite myriads of the luminous and fiery particles which compose the body of the sun, so many, that it would be very unreasonable to suppose no two of them should be exactly equal and alike.

Answer I.—To this I answer—That as we must suppose matter to be infinitely divisible, it is very unlikely that any two of all these particles are exactly equal and alike; so unlikely that it is a thousand to one, yea, an infinite number to one, but it is otherwise; and that although we should allow a great similarity between the different particles of water and fire, as to their general nature and figure; and however small we suppose those particles to be, it is infinitely unlikely that any two of them should be exactly equal in dimensions and quantity of matter. If we should suppose a great many globes of the same nature with the globe of the earth, it would be very strange if there were any two of them that had exactly the same number of particles of dust and water in them. But infinitely less strange than that two particles of light should have just the same quantitity of matter. For a particle of light, according to the doctrine of the infinite divisibility of matter, is composed of infinitely more assignable parts than there are particles of dust and water in the globe of the earth. And as it is infinitely unlikely that any two of these particles should be equal, so it is that they should be alike in other respects. To instance in the configuration of their surfaces. If there were very many globes, of the nature of the earth, it would be very unlikely that *any two* should have exactly the same number of par-

ticles of dust, water, and stone, in their surfaces, and all deposited exactly alike, one with respect to another, without any difference, in any part discernable either by the naked eye or microscope; but infinitely less strange than that two particles of light should be perfectly of the same figure. For there are infinitely more assignable real parts on the surface of a particle of light than there are particles of dust, water, and stone, on the surface of the terrestrial globe.

Answer II.—But then, supposing that there are two particles or atoms of matter perfectly equal and alike, which God has placed in different parts of the creation —as I will not deny it to be possible for God to make two bodies perfectly alike, and put them in different places—yet it will not follow that two different or distinct acts or effects of the divine power have exactly the same fitness for the same ends. For these two different bodies are not different or distinct in any other respects than those wherein they differ; they are two in no other respects than those wherein there is a difference. If they are perfectly equal and alike in themselves, then they can be distinguished, or be distinct, only in those things which are called circumstances—as place, time, rest, motion, or some other present or past circumstances or relations. For it is difference only that constitutes distinction. If God makes two bodies in themselves every way equal and alike, and agreeing perfectly in all other circumstances and relations, but only their place, then in this only is there any distinction or duplicity. The figure is the same, the measure is the same, the solidity and resistance are the same, and everything the same, but only the place. Therefore, what the will of God determines is this, namely, that there should be the same figure, the same extension, the same resistance, &c., in two different places. And for this determination he has some reason. There is some end for which such a determination and act has a peculiar fitness above all other acts. Here is no one thing determined without an end, and no one thing without a fitness for that end, superior to anything else. If it be the pleasure of God to cause the same resistance, and the same figure, to be in two different places and situations, we can no more justly argue from it, that here must be some determination or act of God's will that is wholly without motive or end, than we can argue that whenever in any case it

is a man's will to speak the same words, or make the same sounds, at two different times, there must be some determination or act of his will without any motive or end. The difference of place, in the former case, proves no more than the difference of time does in the other. If any one should say, with regard to the former case, that there must be something determined without an end, namely, that of those two similar bodies, this in particular should be made in this place, and the other in the other, and should inquire why the creator did not make them in a transposition, when both are alike, and each would equally have suited either place? The inquiry supposes something that is not true; namely, that the two bodies differ and are distinct in other respects besides their place. So that with this distinction inherent in them, they might in their first creation have been transposed, and each might have begun its existence in the place of the other.

Let us, for clearness' sake, suppose that God had at the beginning made two globes, each of an inch diameter, both perfect spheres, and perfectly solid without pores, and perfectly alike in every respect, and placed them near one to another, one towards the right hand, and the other towards the left, without any difference as to time, motion or rest, past or present, or any circumstance, but only their place; and the question should be asked, why God in their creation placed them so? Why that which is made on the right hand, was not made on the left, and *vice versa?* Let it be well considered, whether there be any sense in such a question, and whether the inquiry does not suppose something false and absurd. Let it be considered, what the creator must have done otherwise than he did, what different act of will or power he must have exerted, in order to the thing proposed. All that could have been done, would have been to have made two spheres, perfectly alike, in the same places where he has made them, without any difference of the things made, either in themselves, or in any circumstance; so that the whole effect would have been without any difference, and, therefore, just the same. By the supposition, the two spheres are different in no other respect but their place; and, therefore, in other respects they are the same. Each has the same roundness; it is not a distinct rotundity, in any other respect *but its* situation. There are also the same dimensions,

differing in nothing but their place. And so of their resistance, and everything else that belongs to them.

Here if any chooses to say, "that there is a difference in another respect, namely that they are not *numerically* the same; that it is thus with all the qualities that belong to them; that it is confessed they are in some respects the same; that is, they are both exactly alike; but yet numerically they differ. Thus the roundness of one is not the same numerical, individual roundness with that of the other." Let this be supposed; then the question about the determination of the divine will in the affair, is, why did God will, that this individual roundness should be at the right hand, and the other individual roundness at the left? Why did not he make them in a contrary position? Let any rational person consider, whether such questions be not words without a meaning; as much as if God should see fit for some ends to cause the same sounds to be repeated, or made at two different times; the sounds being perfectly the same in every other respect, but only one was a minute after the other; and it should be asked upon it, why did God cause these sounds, numerically different, to succeed one the other in such a manner? why did he not make that individual sound which was in the first minute, to be in the second? and the individual sound of the last minute to be in the first? Which inquiries would be even ridiculous, as I think every person must see at once, in the case proposed of two sounds, being only the same repeated, absolutely without any difference, but that one circumstance of time. If the most high sees it will answer some good end, that the same sound should be made by lightning at two distinct times, and therefore wills that it should be so, must it needs, therefore, be, that herein there is some act of God's will without any motive or end? God saw fit often, at distinct times, and on different occasions, to say the very same words to Moses, namely those, "I am Jehovah;" and would it not be unreasonable to infer as a certain consequence from this, that here must be some act or acts of the divine will, in determining and disposing these words exactly alike at different times, wholly without aim or inducement? But it would be no more unreasonable than to say, that there must be an act of God's without any inducement, if he sees it best, and for some reasons, determines that there shall be the same resis-

tance, the same dimensions, and the same figure in several distinct places.

If in the instance of the two spheres, perfectly alike, it be supposed possible that God might have made them in a contrary position—that which is made at the right hand, being made at the left—then I ask, whether it is not evidently equally possible, if God had made but one of them, and that in the place of the right-hand globe, that he might have made that numerically different from what it is, and numerically different from what he did make it, though perfectly alike, and in the same place, and at the same time, and in every respect, in the same circumstances and relations? Namely, whether he might not have made it numerically the same with that which he has now made at the left hand, and so have left that which is now created at the right hand in a state of non-existence? And if so, whether it would not have been possible to have made one in that place perfectly like these, and yet numerically differing from both? And let it be considered, whether from this notion of a numerical difference in bodies, perfectly equal and alike, which numerical difference is something inherent in the bodies themselves, and diverse from the difference of place or time, or any circumstance whatsoever, it will not follow, that there is an infinite number of numerically different possible bodies, perfectly alike, among which God chooses, by a self-determining power, when he goes about to create bodies.

Therefore, let us put the case thus—Supposing that God in the beginning had created but one perfectly solid sphere, in a certain place; and it should be inquired, why God created that individual sphere, in that place, at that time? And why he did not create another sphere perfectly like it, but numerically different, in the same place, at the same time? Or why he choose to bring into being there, that very body, rather than any of the infinite number of other bodies, perfectly like it; either of which he could have made there as well, and would have answered his end as well? Why he caused to exist, at that place and time, that individual roundness, rather than any other of the infinite number of individual rotundities, just like it? Why that individual resistance, rather than any other of the infinite number *of possible* resistances just like it? And it might as

reasonably be asked, why, when God first caused it to thunder, he caused that individual sound then to be made, and not another just like it? Why did he make choice of this very sound, and reject all the infinite number of other possible sounds just like it, but numerically differing from it, and all differing one from another? I think, everybody must be sensible of the absurdity and nonsense of what is supposed in such inquiries. And if we calmly attend to the matter, we shall be convinced that all such kind of objections as I am answering are founded on nothing but the imperfection of our manner of conceiving of things, and the obscureness of language, and great want of clearness and precision in the signification of terms.

If any shall find fault with this reasoning, that it is going a great length into metaphysical niceties and subtilties, I answer, the objection which they are in reply to is a metaphysical subtilty, and must be treated according to the nature of it.*

Another thing alleged is, that innumerable things which are determined by the divine will, and chosen and done by God rather than others differ, from those that are not chosen in so inconsiderable a manner, that it would be unreasonable to suppose the difference to be of any consequence, or that there is any superior fitness or goodness, that God can have respect to in the determination,

To which I answer, it is impossible for us to determine with any certainty or evidence, that because the difference is very small, and appears to us of no consideration, therefore there is absolutely no superior goodness, and no valuable end which can be proposed by the creator and governor of the world, in ordering such a difference. The forementioned author mentions many instances. One is, there being one atom in the whole universe more or less. But I think it would be unreasonable to suppose that God made one atom in vain, or without any end or motive. He made not one atom but what was a work of his almighty power, as

* "For men to have recourse to subtilties, in raising difficulties, and then complain that they should be taken off by minutely examining these subtilties, is a strange kind of procedure."—Nature of the Human Soul, Vol. II., page 331.

much as the whole globe of the earth, and requires as much of a constant exertion of almighty power to uphold it; and was made and is upheld understandingly, and on design, as much as if no other had been made but that. And it would be as unreasonable to suppose that he made it without anything really aimed at in so doing, as much as to suppose that he made the planet Jupiter without aim or design.

It is possible that the most minute effects of the creator's power, the smallest assignable differences between the things which God has made, may be attended, in the whole series of events, and the whole compass and extent of their influence, with very great and important consequences. If the laws of motion and gravitation, laid down by Sir Isaac Newton, hold universally, there is not one atom, not the least assignable part of an atom, but what has influence, every moment, throughout the whole material universe, to cause every part to be otherwise than it would be, if it were not for that particular corporeal existence. And however the effect is insensible for the present, yet it may in length of time become great and important.

To illustrate this, let us suppose two bodies moving the same way, in strait lines, perfectly parallel one to another, but to be diverted from this parallel course, and drawn one from another, as much as might be by the attraction of an atom, at the distance of one of the farthest of the fixed stars from the earth; these bodies being turned out of the lines of their parallel motion, will, by degrees, get farther and farther distant, one from the other; and though the distance may be imperceptible for a long time, yet at length it may become very great. So the revolution of a planet round the sun being retarded or accelerated, and the orbit of its revolution made greater or less, and more or less elliptical, and so its periodical time longer or shorter, no more than may be by the influence of the least atom, might in length of time perform a whole revolution sooner or later than otherwise it would have done; which might make a vast alteration with regard to millions of important events. So the influence of the least particle may, for ought we know, have such effect on something in the constitution of some human body, as to cause another thought to arise in the mind at a certain time, than

otherwise would have been; which in length of time (yea, and that not very great) might occasion a vast alteration through the whole world of mankind. And so innumerable other ways might be mentioned, wherein the least assignable alteration may possibly be attended with great consequences.

Another argument, which the forementioned author brings against a necessary determination of the divine will by a superior fitness, is, that such doctrine derogates from the freeness of God's grace and goodness, in choosing the objects of his favour and bounty, and from the obligation upon men to thankfulness for special benefits (page 89, &c.)

In answer to this objection, I would observe—Firstly, that it derogates no more from the goodness of God, to suppose the exercise of the benevolence of his nature to be determined by wisdom, than to suppose it determined by chance, and that his favours are bestowed altogether at random, his will being determined by nothing but perfect accident, without any end or design whatsoever; which must be the case, as has been demonstrated, if volition be not determined by a prevailing motive. That which is owing to perfect contingence, wherein neither previous inducement, nor antecedent choice has any hand, is not owing more to goodness or benevolence, than that which is owing to the influence of a wise end.

Secondly—It is acknowledged, that if the motive that determines the will of God, in the choice of the objects of his favours, be any moral quality in the object, recommending that object to his benevolence above others, his choosing that object is not so great a manifestation of the freeness and sovereignty of his grace, as if it were otherwise. But there is no necessity of supposing this in order to our supposing that he has some wise end in view, in determining to bestow his favours on one person rather than another. We are to distinguish between the merit of the object of God's favour, or a moral qualification of the object attracting that favour and recommending to it, and the natural fitness of such a determination of the act of God's goodness, to answer some wise design of his own, some end in the view of God's omniscience. It is God's own act, that is the proper and immediate object of his volition.

Thirdly—I suppose that none will deny but that in some instances God acts from wise design in determining the particular subjects of his favours; none will say, I presume, that when God distinguishes by his bounty particular societies or persons, he never, in any instance, exercises any wisdom in so doing, aiming at some happy consequence. And if it be not denied to be so in some instances, then I would inquire, whether in these instances God's goodness is less manifested than in those wherein God has no aim or end at all? And whether the subjects have less cause of thankfulness? And if so, who shall be thankful for the bestowment of distinguishing mercy, with that enhancing circumstance of the distinction's being made without an end? How shall it be known when God is influenced by some wise aim, and when not? It is very manifest with respect to the Apostle Paul, that God had wise ends in choosing him to be a Christian and an Apostle, who had been a persecutor, &c. The apostle himself mentions one end, (1 Tim. i., 15 and 16,) "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." But yet the apostle never looked on it as a diminution of the freedom and riches of divine grace in his election which he so often and so greatly magnifies.

This brings me to observe, fourthly, our supposing such a moral necessity in the acts of God's will as has been spoken of, is so far from necessarily derogating from the riches of God's grace to such as are the chosen objects of his favour, that in many instances this moral necessity may arise from goodness, and from the great degree of it. God may choose this object rather than another, as having a superior fitness to answer the ends, designs and inclinations of his goodness; being more sinful, and so more miserable and necessitous, than others; the inclinations of infinite mercy and benevolence may be more gratified, and the gracious design of God's sending his son into the world may be more abundantly answered, in the exercises of mercy towards such an object, rather than another.

One thing more I would observe, before I finish what I have to say on the head of the necessity of the acts of

God's will, and that is, that something much more like a servile subjection of the divine being to fatal necessity will follow from Arminian principles, than from the doctrines which they oppose. For they, at least most of them, suppose, with respect to all events that happen in the moral world depending on the volitions of moral agents, which are the most important events of the universe, to which all others are subordinate—I say, they suppose with respect to these, that God has a certain foreknowledge of them, antecedent to any purposes or decrees of his about them. And if so, they have a fixed certain futurity, prior to any designs or volitions of his, and independent on them, and to which his volitions must be subject, as he would wisely accommodate his affairs to this fixed futurity of the state of things in the moral world. So that here, instead of a moral necessity of God's will, arising from or consisting in the infinite perfection and blessedness of the divine being, we have a fixed unalterable state of things, properly distinct from the perfect nature of the divine mind, and the state of the divine will and design, and entirely independent on these things, and which they have no hand in, because they are prior to them; and which God's will is truly subject to, he being obliged to conform or accommodate himself to it, in all his purposes and decrees, and in everything he does in his disposals and government of the world; the moral world being the end of the natural; so that all is in vain that is not accommodated to that state of the moral world which consists in, or depends upon, the acts and state of the wills of moral agents, which had a fixed futurition from eternity. Such a subjection to necessity as this, would truly argue an inferiority and servitude that would be unworthy of the supreme being, and is much more agreeable to the notion which many of the heathen had of fate, as above the gods, than that moral necessity of fitness and wisdom which has been spoken of; and is truly repugnant to the absolute sovereignty of God, and inconsistent with the supremacy of his will! and really subjects the will of the most high to the will of his creatures, and brings him into dependence upon them.

SECTION IX.

Concerning that Objection against the Doctrine which has been maintained, that it makes God the Author of Sin.

It is urged by Arminians, that the doctrine of the necessity of men's volitions, or their necessary connection with antecedent events and circumstances, makes the first cause, and supreme orderer of all things, the author of sin, in that he has so constituted the state and course of things that sinful volitions become necessary in consequence of his disposal; Dr. Whitby, in his Discourse on the Freedom of the Will, * cites one of the ancients, as on his side, declaring that this opinion of the necessity of the will "absolves sinners, as doing nothing of their own accord which was evil, and would cast all the blame of all the wickedness committed in the world upon God, and upon his providence, if that were admitted by the asserters of this fate, whether he himself did necessitate them to do these things, or ordered matters so that they should be constrained to do them by some other cause." And the Doctor says, in another place, † "In the nature of the thing, and in the opinion of philosophers, *causa deficiens, in rebus necessariis, ad causam per se efficientem reducenda est.* In things necessary, the deficient cause must be reduced to the efficient. And in this case the reason is evident; because the not doing what is required, or not avoiding what is forbidden, being a defect, must follow from the position of the necessary cause of that deficiency."

Concerning this, I would observe the following things:—Firstly, if there be any difficulty in this matter, it is nothing peculiar to this scheme; it is no difficulty or disadvantage wherein it is distinguished from the scheme of Arminians; and, therefore, not reasonably objected by them.

Dr. Whitby supposes, that if sin necessarily follows from God's witholding assistance, or if that assistance be not given which is absolutely necessary to the avoid-

* On the Five Points, page 361. † Ibid, page 486.

ing of evil, then, in the nature of the thing, God must be as properly the author of that evil as if he were the efficient cause of it. From whence, according to what he himself says of the devils and damned spirits, God must be the proper author of their perfect unrestrained wickedness; he must be the efficient cause of the great pride of the devils, and of their perfect malignity against God, Christ, his saints, and all that is good, and of the insatiable cruelty of their disposition. For he allows that God has so forsaken them, and does so withhold his assistance from them, that they are incapacitated for doing good, and determined only to evil.* Our doctrine, in its consequence, makes God the author of men's sin in this world no more, and in no other sense, than his doctrine in its consequence, makes God the author of the hellish pride and malice of the devils. And, doubtless, the latter is as odious an effect as the former.

Again, if it will follow at all that God is the author of sin, from what has been supposed of a sure and infallible connection between antecedents and consequents, it will follow because of this, namely, that for God to be the author or orderer of those things which he knows beforehand will infallibly be attended with such a consequence, is the same thing in effect as for him to be the author of that consequence. But if this be so, this is a difficulty which equally attends the doctrine of Arminians themselves; at least, of those of them who allow God's certain foreknowledge of all events. For on the supposition of such a foreknowledge, this is the case with respect to every sin that is committed; God knew that if he ordered and brought to pass such and such events, such sins would infallibly follow. As for instance, God certainly foreknew, long before Judas was born, that if he ordered things so that there should be such a man born, at such a time, and at such a place, and that his life should be preserved, and that he should, in divine providence, be led into acquaintance with Jesus, and that his heart should be so influenced by God's spirit or providence as to be inclined to be a follower of Christ; and that he should be one of those twelve which should be chosen constantly to attend him as his family; and that his health should be preserved so that he should go up to Jerusalem at the last Pass-

* On the Five Points, pages 302 and 304.

over in Christ's life; and that if it should be so ordered that Judas should see Christ's kind treatment of the woman which anointed him at Bethany, and have that reproof from Christ which he had at that time, and see and hear other things, which excited his enmity against his master; and that if other circumstances should be ordered, as they were ordered; it would be, what would most certainly and infallibly follow, that Judas would betray his Lord, and would soon after hang himself, and die impenitent, and be sent to hell, for his horrid wickedness.

Therefore this supposed difficulty ought not to be brought as an objection against the scheme which has been maintained, as disagreeing with the Arminian scheme, seeing it is no difficulty owing to such a disagreement; but a difficulty wherein the Arminians share with us. That must be unreasonably made an objection against our differing from them, which we should not escape or avoid at all by agreeing with them.

And, therefore, I would observe, secondly, they who object that this doctrine makes God the author of sin, ought distinctly to explain what they mean by that phrase, "the author of sin." I know the phrase, as it is commonly used, signifies something very ill. If by the author of sin, be meant the sinner, the agent, or actor of sin, or the doer of a wicked thing, so it would be a reproach and blasphemy to suppose God to be the author of sin. In this sense, I utterly deny God to be the author of sin; rejecting such an imputation on the most high, as what is infinitely to be abhorred; and deny any such thing to be the consequence of what I have laid down. But if by the author of sin is meant the permitter, or not a hinderer of sin, and at the same time, a disposer of the state of events, in such a manner, for wise, holy, and most excellent ends and purposes, that sin if it be permitted, or not hindered, will most certainly and infallibly follow—I say, if this be all that is meant, by being the author of sin, I do not deny that God is the author of sin, (though I dislike and reject the phrase, as that which by use and custom is apt to carry another sense,) and it is no reproach for the most High to be thus the author of sin. This is not to be the actor of sin, but, on the contrary, of holiness. What God doth herein is holy, and a glorious exercise of the

infinite excellency of his nature. And I do not deny, that God's being thus the author of sin follows from what I have laid down; and I assert, that it equally follows from the doctrine which is maintained by most of the Arminian divines.

That it is most certainly so, that God is in such a manner the disposer and orderer of sin, is evident, if any credit is to be given to the Scripture, as well as because it is impossible in the nature of things to be otherwise. In such a manner God ordered the obstinacy of Pharaoh, in his refusing to obey God's commands, to let the people go—Exod. iv., 21, "I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go;" chap. vii., 2, 5, "Aaron, thy brother, shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the Children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that I may lay mine hand upon Egypt, by great judgments," &c.; chap. ix., 12, "And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had spoken unto Moses;" chap. x., 1, 2, "And the Lord said unto Moses, go in unto Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these my signs before him, and that thou mayest tell it in the ears of thy son, and thy son's sons, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done amongst them, that ye may know that I am the Lord;" chap. xiv., 4, "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them: and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host;" verse 8, "And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued after the Children of Israel." And it is certain that in such a manner, God, for wise and good ends, ordered that event, Joseph's being sold into Egypt, by his brethren—Gen. xlv., 5, "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life;" verse 7, 8, "God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance; so that now it was not you that sent me hither, but God." Psal. cv., 17, "He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant." It is certain, that thus God ordered the sin and folly of Sihon, king of the Amorites, in refusing to let the people of Israel pass by him peace

ably Deut. ii., 30, "But Sihon, king of Heshbon, would not let us pass by him; for the Lord thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thine hand." It is certain, that God thus ordered the sin and folly of the kings of Canaan, that they attempted not to make peace with Israel, but with a stupid boldness and obstinacy, set themselves violently to oppose them and their God—Josh. xi., 20, "For it was of the Lord, to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour; but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses." It is evident, that thus God ordered the treacherous rebellion of Zedekiah, against the king of Babylon—Jer. lii., 3, "For through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem, and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon." So 2 Kings xxiv., 20. And it is exceeding manifest that God thus ordered the rapine and unrighteous ravages of Nebuchadnezzar, in spoiling and ruining the nations round about—Jer. xxv., 9, "Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against all the nations round about; and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations;" chap. xliii., 10, 11, "I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant; and I will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid, and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them. And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, and deliver such as are for death to death, and such as are for captivity to captivity, and such as are for the sword to the sword." Thus God represents himself as sending for Nebuchadnezzar, and taking of him and his armies, and bringing him against the nations which were to be destroyed by him, to that very end, that he might utterly destroy them, and make them desolate; and as appointing the work that he should do so particularly, that the very persons were designed that he should kill with the sword; and those that should be killed with famine and pestilence, and those that should be carried into captivity; and that in doing all these things, he should act as his servant; by which less cannot be in*tended* than that he should serve his purposes and

designs. And in Jer. xvii., 4, 5, 6, God declares how he would cause him thus to serve his designs, namely, by bringing this to pass in his sovereign disposals, as the great possessor and governor of the universe, that disposes all things just as pleases him —" Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel; I have made the earth, the man, and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power, and my stretched out arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me: and now I have given all these lands into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar *my servant*, and the beasts of the field have I given also to serve him." And Nebuchadnezzar is spoken of as doing these things, by having his arms strengthened by God, and having " God's sword put into his hands, for this end," Ezek. xxx., 24, 25, 26. Yea, God speaks of his terribly ravaging and wasting the nations, and cruelly destroying all sorts, without distinction of sex or age, as the weapon in God's hand, and the instrument of his indignation, which God makes use of to fulfil his own purposes, and execute his own vengeance—Jer. li., 20, &c., " Thou art my battle-axe, and weapons of war. For with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee I will destroy kingdoms, and with thee I will break in pieces the horse and his rider, and with thee, I will break in pieces the chariot and his rider; with thee also will I break in pieces man and woman; and with thee will I break in pieces old and young; and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid," &c. It is represented, that the designs of Nebuchadnezzar, and those that destroyed Jerusalem, never could have been accomplished had not God determined them, as well as they—Lam. iii., 37, " Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, and the Lord commandeth it not?" And yet the king of Babylon's thus destroying the nations, and especially the Jews, is spoken of as his great wickedness, for which God finally destroyed him—Isa. xiv., 4, 5, 6, 12; Hab, ii., 5, 12; and Jer. l. and li. It is most manifest, that God, to serve his own designs, providentially ordered Shimei's cursing David—2 Samuel xvi., 10, 11, " The Lord had said unto him, curse David. Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him."

It is certain that God thus, for excellent, holy, gracious, and glorious ends, ordered the fact which they committed who were concerned in Christ's death; and

that therein they did but fulfil God designs. As, I trust, no Christian will deny, it was the design of God that Christ should be crucified, and that for this end, he came into the world. It is very manifest by many Scriptures, that the whole affair of Christ's crucifixion, with its circumstances, and the treachery of Judas, that made way for it, was ordered in God's providence, in pursuance of his purpose, notwithstanding the violence that is used with those plain Scriptures, to obscure and pervert the sense of them—Acts ii., 23, "Him being delivered, by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God,* ye have taken, and with wicked hands, have crucified and slain;" Luke xxii., 21, 22, † "But behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table; and truly the Son of Man goeth, as it was determined;" Acts iv., 27, 28, "For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council determined before to be done;" Acts iii., 17, 18. "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers; but these things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." So that what these murderers of Christ did, is spoken of as what God brought to pass or ordered, and that by which he fulfilled his own word.

In Rev. xvii., 17, "The agreeing of the kings of the earth to give their kingdom to the beast," though it was a very wicked thing in them, is spoken of as a fulfilling God's will, and what God had put into their hearts to do. It is manifest, that God sometimes permits sin to be committed, and at the same time orders things so, that if he permits the fact, it will come to pass, because

* "Grotius, as well as Beza, observes, that *Prognosis* must here signify decree; and Elsner has shown that it has that signification in approved Greek writers. And it is certain *Ekdotus* signifies one given up into the hands of an enemy."—Doddridge in Lock.

† "As this passage is not liable to the ambiguities which some have apprehended in Acts ii, 23 and iv., 28, (which yet seem on the whole to be parallel to it, in their most natural construction,) I look upon it as an evident proof, that these things are, in the language of the Scripture, said to be determined or decreed, (or exactly bounded and marked out by God, as the word *Orizo* most naturally signifies,) which he sees in fact will happen, in *consequence* of his volitions, without any necessitating agency; as well *as those events* of which he is properly the author."—Doddridge in Lock.

on some accounts he sees it needful and of importance that it should come to pass—Matt. xviii., 7, "It must needs be, that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh;" With 1 Cor. xi., 19, "For there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

Thus it is certain and demonstrable, from the holy Scriptures as well as from the nature of things, and the principles of Arminians, that God permits sin, and, at the same time, so orders things, in his providence, that it certainly and infallibly will come to pass, in consequence of his permission.

I proceed to observe, in the next place, thirdly, that there is a great difference between God's being concerned thus, by his permission, in an event and act, which in the inherent subject and agent of it, is sin, (though the event will certainly follow on his permission,) and his being concerned in it by producing it and exerting the act of sin; or between his being the orderer of its certain existence, by not hindering it, under certain circumstances, and his being the proper actor or author of it, by a positive agency or efficiency; and this, notwithstanding what Dr. Whitby offers about a saying of philosophers, that *causa deficiens, in rebus necessariis, ad causam per se efficientem reducenda est.* As there is a vast difference between the sun's being the cause of the lightsomeness and warmth of the atmosphere, and brightness of gold and diamonds, by its presence and positive influence, and its being the occasion of darkness and frost, in the night, by its motion, whereby it descends below the horizon. The motion of the sun is the occasion of the latter kind of events; but it is not the proper cause, efficient or producer of them, though they are necessarily consequent on that motion, under such circumstances. No more is any action of the divine being the cause of the evil of men's wills. If the sun were the proper cause of cold and darkness, it would be the fountain of these things, as it is the fountain of light and heat; and then something might be argued from the nature of cold and darkness, to a likeness of nature in the sun; and it might be justly inferred that the sun itself is dark and cold, and that his beams are black and frosty. But from its being the cause no otherwise than by its departure, no such

thing can be inferred, but the contrary; it may justly be argued that the sun is a bright and hot body, if cold and darkness are found to be the consequence of its withdrawment; and the more constantly and necessarily these effects are connected with, and confined to, its absence, the more strongly does it argue the sun to be the fountain of light and heat. So, inasmuch as sin is not the fruit of any positive agency or influence of the most high, but, on the contrary, arises from the withholding of his action and energy, and under certain circumstances, necessarily follows on the want of his influence; this is no argument that he is sinful, or his operation evil, or has anything of the nature of evil; but, on the contrary, that he, and his agency, are altogether good and holy, and that he is the fountain of all holiness. It would be strange arguing, indeed, because men never commit sin, but only when God leaves them to themselves, and necessarily sin when he does so, that, therefore, their sin is not from themselves, but from God; and so, that God must be a sinful being; as strange as it would be to argue, because it is always dark when the sun is gone, and never dark when the sun is present, that therefore all darkness is from the sun, and that his disc and beams must needs be black.

Fourthly—It properly belongs to the supreme and absolute governor of the universe to order all important events within his dominion by his wisdom; but the events in the moral world are of the most important kind; such as the moral actions of intelligent creatures, and their consequences.

These events will be ordered by something. They will either be disposed by wisdom, or they will be disposed by chance—that is, they will be disposed by blind and undesigning causes, if that were possible, and could be called a disposal. Is it not better that the good and evil which happens in God's world should be ordered, regulated, bounded, and determined by the good pleasure of an infinitely wise being, who perfectly comprehends within his understanding and constant view, the universality of things, in all their extent and duration, and sees all the influence of every event, with respect to every individual thing and circumstance, throughout the grand system, and the whole of the eternal series of consequences, than to leave these things to fall out by

chance, and to be determined by those causes which have no understanding or aim? Doubtless, in these important events, there is a better and a worse, as to the time, subject, place, manner, and circumstances of their coming to pass, with regard to their influence on the state and course of things. And if there be, it is certainly best that they should be determined to that time, place, &c., which is best. And, therefore, it is in its own nature fit, that wisdom and not chance should order these things. So that it belongs to the being, who is the possessor of infinite wisdom, and is the creator and owner of the whole system of created existences, and has the care of all—I say, it belongs to him, to take care of this matter; and he would not do what is proper for him, if he should neglect it. And it is so far from being unholy in him to undertake this affair, that it would rather have been unholy to neglect it; as it would have been a neglecting what fitly appertains to him; and so it would have been a very unfit and unsuitable neglect.

Therefore the sovereignty of God doubtless extends to this matter; especially considering that if it should be supposed to be otherwise, and God should leave men's volitions, and all moral events to the determination and disposition of blind and unmeaning causes, or they should be left to happen perfectly without a cause, this would be no more consistent with liberty, in any notion of it, and particularly not in the Arminian notion of it, than if these events were subject to the disposal of divine providence, and the will of man were determined by circumstances which are ordered and disposed by divine wisdom, as appears by what has been already observed. But it is evident that such a providential disposing and determining men's moral actions, though it infers a moral necessity of those actions, yet it does not in the least infringe the real liberty of mankind; the only liberty that common sense teaches to be necessary to moral agency, which, as has been demonstrated, is not inconsistent with such necessity.

On the whole, it is manifest, that God may be, in the manner which has been described, the orderer and disposer of that event, which in the inherent subject and agent is moral evil; and yet his so doing may be no moral evil. He may will the disposal of such an event, and its coming to pass for good ends, and his will not

be an immoral or sinful will, but a perfectly holy will. And he may actually in his providence so dispose and permit things, that the event may be certainly and infallibly connected with such disposal and permission, and his act therein not be an immoral or unholy, but a perfectly holy act. Sin may be an evil thing, and yet that there should be such a disposal and permission, as that it should come to pass, may be a good thing. This is no contradiction, or inconsistence. Joseph's brethren's selling him into Egypt, consider it only as it was acted by them, and with respect to their views and aims which were evil, was a very bad thing; but it was a good thing, as it was an event of God's ordering, and considered with respect to his views and aims, which were good. Gen. l., 20, "As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." So the crucifixion of Christ, if we consider only those things which belong to the event as it proceeded from his murderers, and are comprehended within the compass of the affair considered as their act, their principles, dispositions, views, and aims, so it was one of the most heinous things that ever was done; in many respects the most horrid of all acts; but consider it, as it was willed and ordered of God, in the extent of his designs and views, it was the most admirable and glorious of all events; and God's willing the event was the most holy volition of God that ever was made known to men; and God's act in ordering it was a divine act, which, above all others, manifests the moral excellency of the divine being.

The consideration of these things may help us to a sufficient answer to the cavils of Arminians concerning what has been supposed by many Calvinists, of a distinction between a secret and revealed will of God, and their diversity one from the other; supposing, that the Calvinists herein ascribe inconsistent wills to the most high; which is without any foundation. God's secret and revealed will, or in other words, his disposing and preceptive will, may be diverse, and exercised in dissimilar acts, the one in disapproving and opposing, the other in willing and determining, without any inconsistence. Because, although these dissimilar exercises of the divine will may in some respects relate to the same things, yet in strictness they have different and contrary objects, the one evil and the other good. Thus, for instance, the crucifixion of Christ was a thing contrary

to the revealed or preceptive will of God; because, as it was viewed and done by his malignant murderers, it was a thing infinitely contrary to the holy nature of God, and so necessarily contrary to the holy inclination of his heart revealed in his law. Yet this does not at all hinder but that the crucifixion of Christ, considered with all those glorious consequences, which were within the view of the divine omniscience, might be indeed, and therefore might appear to God to be, a glorious event; and, consequently, be agreeable to his will, though this will may be secret—*i.e.*, not revealed in God's law. And thus considered, the crucifixion of Christ was not evil, but good. If the secret exercises of God's will were of a kind that is dissimilar and contrary to his revealed will, respecting the same, or like objects—if the objects of both were good, or both evil—then, indeed, to ascribe contrary kinds of volition or inclination to God, respecting these objects, would be to ascribe an inconsistent will to God; but to ascribe to him different and opposite exercises of heart, respecting different objects, and objects contrary one to another, is so far from supposing God's will to be inconsistent with itself, that it cannot be supposed consistent with itself any other way. For any being to have a will of choice respecting good, and at the same time a will of rejection and refusal respecting evil, is to be very consistent; but the contrary, namely, to have the same will towards these contrary objects, and to choose and love both good and evil at the same time, is to be very inconsistent.

There is no inconsistence in supposing, that God may hate a thing as it is in itself, and considered simply as evil, and yet that it may be his will it should come to pass, considering all consequences. I believe there is no person of good understanding, who will venture to say, he is certain that it is impossible it should be best, taking in the whole compass and extent of existence, and all consequences in the endless series of events, that there should be such a thing as moral evil in the world. * And if so, it will certainly follow, that

* Here are worthy to be observed some passages of a late noted writer of our nation, that nobody who is acquainted with him will suspect to be very favourable to Calvinism. "It is difficult (says he) to handle the necessity of evil in such a manner as not to stumble such as are not above being alarmed at propositions which have an uncommon sound. But if philosophers will but reflect calmly on the matter, they will find, that consistently with the unlimited power of the supreme cause, it may be said, that in the

an infinitely wise being, who always chooses what is best, must choose that there should be such a thing. And, if so, then such a choice is not an evil, but a wise and holy choice. And if so, then that providence which is agreeable to such a choice, is a wise and holy providence. Men do will sin as sin, and so are the authors and actors of it; they love it as sin, and for evil ends and purposes. God does not will sin as sin, or for the sake of anything evil, though it be his pleasure so to order things, that he permitting, sin will come to pass, for the sake of the great good that by his disposal shall be the consequence. His willing to order things so that evil should come to pass, for the sake of the contrary good, is no argument that he does not hate evil, as evil; and if so, then it is no reason why he may not reasonably forbid evil as evil, and punish it as such.

The Arminians themselves must be obliged, whether they will or no, to allow a distinction of God's will, amounting to just the same thing that Calvinists intend by their distinction of a secret and revealed will. They

best ordered system, evils must have place."—Turnbull's principles of Moral Philosophy, pages 327 and 328. He is there speaking of moral evils, as may be seen. Again the same author, in his second vol., entitled Christian Philosophy, page 35, has these words:—"If the author and governor of all things be infinitely perfect, then whatever is, is right; of all possible systems he hath chosen the best; and, consequently, there is no absolute evil in the universe. This being the case, all the seeming imperfections or evils in it are such only in a partial view; and with respect to the whole system they are goods."—Ibid, page 37. "Whence then comes evil, is the question that hath in all ages been reckoned the Gordian knot in philosophy. And, indeed, if we own the existence of evil in the world in an absolute sense, we diametrically contradict what hath been just now proved of God. For if there be any evil in the system, that is not good with respect to the whole, then is the whole not good, but evil; or, at best, very imperfect; and an author must be as his workmanship is; as is the effect, such is the cause. But the solution of this difficulty is at hand—that there is no evil in the universe. What! are there no pains, no imperfections? Is there no misery, no vice in the world? Or are not these evils? Evils, indeed they are; that is, those of one sort are hurtful, and those of the other sort are equally hurtful and abominable; but they are not evil or mischievous with respect to the whole."—Ibid, page 42. "But he is, at the same time, said to create evil, darkness, confusion, and yet to do no evil, but to be the author of good only. He is called the father of lights, the author of every perfect and good gift, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning, who tempteth no man, but giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and yet by the prophet Isaiah he is introduced saying of himself, 'I form light, and create darkness; I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.' What is the meaning, the plain language of all this, but that the Lord delighteth in goodness, and, as the Scripture speaks, evil is his strange work? He intends and pursues the universal good of his creation; and the evil which happens is not permitted for its own sake, or through any pleasure in evil, but because it is requisite to the greater good pursued."

must allow a distinction of those things which God thinks best should be, considering all circumstances and consequences, and so are agreeable to his disposing will, and those things which he loves, and are agreeable to his nature, in themselves considered. Who is there that will dare to say, that the hellish pride, malice, and cruelty of devils are agreeable to God, and what he likes and approves? And yet, I trust there is no Christian divine but what will allow that it is agreeable to God's will so to order and dispose things concerning them, so to leave them to themselves, and give them up to their own wickedness, that this perfect wickedness should be a necessary consequence. Be sure Dr. Whitby's words do plainly suppose and allow it.*

These following things may be laid down as maxims of plain truth, and indisputable evidence:—

Firstly—That God is a perfectly happy being, in the most absolute and highest sense possible.

Secondly—That it will follow from hence that God is free from everything that is contrary to happiness; and so that, in strict propriety of speech, there is no such thing as any pain, grief, or trouble in God.

Thirdly—When any intelligent being is really crossed and disappointed, and things are contrary to what he truly desires, he is the less pleased, or has less pleasure, his pleasure and happiness is diminished, and he suffers what is disagreeable to him, or is the subject of something that is of a nature contrary to joy and happiness, even pain and grief.†

From this last axiom it follows, that if no distinction is to be admitted between God's hatred of sin and his will with respect to the event and the existence of sin, as the all-wise determiner of all events, under the view of all consequences through the whole compass and

* Whitby on the Five Points, second edition, pages 300, 305, 309.

† Certainly it is not less absurd and unreasonable to talk of God's will and desires being truly and properly crossed, without his suffering any uneasiness, or anything grievous or disagreeable, than it is to talk of something that may be called a revealed will, which may in some respect be different from a secret purpose; which purpose may be fulfilled, when the other is opposed.

series of things, I say, then it certainly follows that the coming to pass of every individual act of sin is truly, all things considered, contrary to his will, and that his will is really crossed in it; and this in proportion as he hates it. And as God's hatred of sin is infinite, by reason of the infinite contrariety of his holy nature to sin, so his will is infinitely crossed in every act of sin that happens. Which is as much as to say, he endures that which is infinitely disagreeable to him by means of every act of sin that he sees committed. And, therefore, as appears by the preceding positions, he endures truly and really infinite grief or pain from every sin. And so he must be infinitely crossed, and suffer infinite pain, every day, in millions of millions of instances; he must continually be the subject of an immense number of real and truly infinitely great crosses and vexations, which would be to make him infinitely the most miserable of all beings.

If any objector should say, all that these things amount to is, that God may do evil that good may come—which is justly esteemed immoral and sinful in men, and, therefore, may be justly esteemed inconsistent with the moral perfections of God—I answer, that for God to dispose and permit evil, in the manner that has been spoken of, is not to do evil that good may come, for it is not to do evil at all. In order to a thing's being morally evil, there must be one of these things belonging to it—either it must be a thing unfit and unsuitable in its own nature, or it must have a bad tendency, or it must proceed from an evil disposition, and be done for an evil end. But neither of these things can be attributed to God's ordering and permitting such events as the immoral acts of creatures for good ends. Firstly—It is not unfit in its own nature that he should do so; for it is in its own nature fit that infinite wisdom, and not blind chance, should dispose moral good and evil in the world. And it is fit that the being who has infinite wisdom, and is the maker, owner, and supreme governor of the world, should take care of that matter. And, therefore, there is no unfitness or unsuitableness in his doing it. It may be unfit, and so immoral, for any other beings to go about to order this affair, because they are not possessed of a wisdom that *in any* manner fits them for it; and in other respects

they are not fit to be trusted with this affair; nor does it belong to them, they not being the owners and lords of the universe.

We need not be afraid to affirm, that if a wise and good man knew with absolute certainty it would be best, all things considered, that there should be such a thing as moral evil in the world, it would not be contrary to his wisdom and goodness for him to choose that it should be so. It is no evil desire to desire good, and to desire that which, all things considered, is best. And it is no unwise choice to choose that that should be which it is best should be, and to choose the existence of that thing concerning which it is known, namely, that it is best it should be, and so is known on the whole to be most worthy to be chosen. On the contrary, it would be a plain defect in wisdom and goodness for him not to choose it. And the reason why he might not order it, if he were able, would not be because he might not desire it, but only the ordering of that matter does not belong to him. But it is no harm for him who is by right, and in the greatest propriety, the supreme orderer of all things, to order everything in such a manner as it would be a point of wisdom in him to choose that they should be ordered. If it would be a plain defect of wisdom and goodness in a being not to choose that that should be which he certainly knows it would, all things considered, be best should be (as was but now observed), then it must be impossible for a being who has no defect of wisdom and goodness to do otherwise than choose it should be; and that for this very reason, because he is perfectly wise and good. And if it be agreeable to perfect wisdom and goodness for him to choose that it should be, and the ordering of all things supremely and perfectly belongs to him, it must be agreeable to infinite wisdom and goodness to order that it should be. If the choice is good, the ordering and disposing things according to that choice must also be good. It can be no harm in one to whom it belongs to do his will in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth, to execute a good volition. If his will be good, and the object of his will be, all things considered, good and best, then the choosing or willing it is not willing evil that good may come. And if so, then his ordering according to that will is not doing evil, that good may come.

Secondly—It is not of a bad tendency for the supreme being thus to order and permit that moral evil to be which it is best should come to pass; for that it is of good tendency is the very thing supposed in the point now in question. Christ's crucifixion, though a most horrid fact in them that perpetrated it, was of most glorious tendency as permitted and ordered of God.

Thirdly—Nor is there any need of supposing it proceeds from any evil disposition or aim; for by the supposition, what is aimed at is good, and good is the actual issue in the final result of things.

SECTION X.

Concerning Sin's First Entrance into the World.

The things which have already been offered may serve to obviate or clear many of the objections which might be raised concerning sin's first coming into the world; as though it would follow from the doctrine maintained that God must be the author of the first sin, through his so disposing things that it should necessarily follow from his permission that the sinful act should be committed, &c.; I need not, therefore, stand to repeat what has been said already about such a necessity's not proving God to be the author of sin, in any ill sense, or in any such sense as to infringe any liberty of man, concerned in his moral agency, or capacity of blame, guilt, and punishment.

But if it should, nevertheless, be said, supposing the case so, that God when he had made man, might so order his circumstances that from these circumstances, together with his withholding further assistance and divine influence, his sin would infallibly follow, why might not God as well have first made man with a fixed prevailing principle of sin in his heart?

I answer, firstly, it was meet, if sin did come into existence, and appear in the world, it should arise from the imperfection which properly belongs to a creature as such, and should appear so to do, that it might appear not to be from God as the efficient or fountain. But

this could not have been if man had been made at first with sin in his heart, nor unless the abiding principle and habit of sin were first introduced by an evil act of the creature. If sin had not arose from the imperfection of the creature, it would not have been so visible that it did not arise from God, as the positive cause and real source of it. But it would require room that cannot here be allowed fully to consider all the difficulties which have been started concerning the first entrance of sin into the world.

And, therefore, secondly, I would observe, that objections against the doctrine that has been laid down, in opposition to the Arminian notion of liberty, from these difficulties, are altogether impertinent, because no additional difficulty is incurred by adhering to a scheme in this manner differing from theirs, and none could be removed or avoided by agreeing with and maintaining theirs. Nothing that the Arminians say about the contingence, or self-determining power of man's will, can serve to explain with less difficulty how the first sinful volition of mankind could take place, and man be justly charged with the blame of it. To say the will was self-determined, or determined by free choice, in that sinful volition, which is to say that the first sinful volition was determined by a foregoing sinful volition, is no solution of the difficulty. It is an odd way of solving difficulties to advance greater, in order to it. To say, two and two make nine, or that a child begat his father, solves no difficulty; no more does it to say the first sinful act of choice was before the first sinful act of choice, and chose and determined it, and brought it to pass. Nor is it any better solution to say, the first sinful volition chose, determined, and produced itself; which is to say, it was before it was. Nor will it go any further towards helping us over the difficulty to say, the first sinful volition arose accidentally, without any cause at all, any more than it will solve the difficult question, "How the world could be made out of nothing?" to say, it came into being out of nothing, without any cause, as has been already observed. And if we should allow that that could be, that the first evil volition should arise by perfect accident, without any cause, it would relieve no difficulty about God's laying the blame of it to man. For how was man to blame for perfect accident, which had no cause, and which, therefore, he, to be sure, was

not the cause of, any more than if it came by some external cause? Such kind of solutions are no better than if some person, going about to solve some of the strange mathematical paradoxes, about infinitely great and small quantities—as that some infinitely great quantities are infinitely greater than some other infinitely great quantities, and also that some infinitely small quantities are infinitely less than others, which are infinitely little—in order to a solution; should say, that mankind have been under a mistake, in supposing a greater quantity to exceed a smaller, and that a hundred multipled by ten makes but a single unit.

SECTION XI.

Of a Supposed Inconsistence of these Principles with God's moral Character.

The things which have been already observed may be sufficient to answer most of the objections, and silence the great exclamations of Arminians against the Calvinists, from the supposed inconsistence of Calvinistic principles with the moral perfections of God, as exercised in his government of mankind. The consistence of such a doctrine of necessity as has been maintained with the fitness and reasonableness of God's commands, promises and threatenings, rewards and punishments, has been particularly considered; the cavils of our opponents, as though our doctrine of necessity made God the author of sin, have been answered; and also their objections against these principles, as inconsistent with God's sincerity in his counsels, invitations, and persuasions, has been already obviated in what has been observed respecting the consistence of what Calvinists suppose concerning the secret and revealed will of God; by that it appears, there is no repugnance in supposing it may be the secret will of God that his ordination and permission of events should be such that it shall be a certain consequence that a thing never will come to pass, which yet it is man's duty to do, and so God's preceptive will that he should do; and this is the same thing as to say, God may sincerely command and require him to do it. And *if he may* be sincere in commanding him, he may, for the

same reason, be sincere in counselling, inviting, and using persuasions with him to do it. Counsels and invitations are manifestations of God's preceptive will, or of what God loves, and what is in itself, and as man's act, agreeable to his heart, and not of his disposing will, and what he chooses as a part of his own infinite scheme of things. It has been particularly shown (Part III., Sect. iv.,) that such a necessity as has been maintained is not inconsistent with the propriety and fitness of divine commands, and for the same reason, not inconsistent with the sincerity of invitations and counsels, in the corollary at the end of that section. Yea, it hath been shown, (Part III., Sect. vii., Coral. 1,) that this objection of Arminians, concerning the sincerity and use of divine exhortations, invitations, and counsels, is demonstrably against themselves.

Notwithstanding, I would further observe, that the difficulty of reconciling the sincerity of counsels, invitations, and persuasions with such an antecedent known fixedness of all events as has been supposed, is not peculiar to this scheme, as distinguished from that of the generality of Arminians, which acknowledge the absolute foreknowledge of God; and, therefore, it would be unreasonably brought as an objection against my differing from them. The main seeming difficulty in the case is this—that God in counselling, inviting, and persuading, makes a show of aiming at, seeking, and using endeavours for the thing exhorted and persuaded to, whereas it is impossible for any intelligent being truly to seek or use endeavours for a thing which he at the same time knows most perfectly will not come to pass; and that it is absurd to suppose he make the obtaining of a thing his end, in his calls and counsels, which he at the same time infallibly knows will not be obtained by these means. Now, if God knows this, in the utmost sincerity and perfection, the way by which he comes by this knowledge makes no difference. If he knows it by the necessity which he sees in things, or by some other means, it alters not the case. But it is in effect allowed by Arminians themselves, that God's inviting and persuading men to do things, which he at the same time certainly knows will not be done, is no evidence of insincerity, because they allow that God has a certain foreknowledge of all men's sinful actions and omissions. And as this is implicitly allowed by most Arminians, so

all that pretend to own the Scriptures to be the word of God must be constrained to allow it. God commanded and counselled Pharaoh to let his people go, and used arguments and persuasions to induce him to it; he laid before him arguments taken from his infinite greatness and almighty power, (Exod. vii., 16,) and forewarned him of the fatal consequences of his refusal, from time to time, (chap. viii., 1, 2, 20 and 21; chap. ix., 1, 5, 13, 17, and x., 3 and 6.) He commanded Moses and the elders of Israel to go and beseech Pharaoh to let the people go, and at the same time told them he knew surely that he would not comply with it—Exod. iii., 18, 19, "And thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the King of Egypt, and you shall say unto him, the Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us; and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God; and I am sure that the King of Egypt will not let you go." So our blessed Saviour, the evening wherein he was betrayed, knew that Peter would shamefully deny him before the morning, for he declares it to him with asseverations, to show the certainty of it; and tells the disciples, that all of them should be offended because of him that night, (Matt. xxvi., 31, 35; Luke xxii., 31, 34; John xiii., 38; John xvi., 32.) And yet it was their duty to avoid these things; they were very sinful things, which God had forbidden, and which it was their duty to watch and pray against; and they were obliged to do so from the counsels and persuasions Christ used with them, at that very time, so to do—(Matt. xxvi., 41, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." So that whatever difficulty there can be in this matter, it can be no objection against any principles which have been maintained in opposition to the principles of Arminians; nor does it any more concern me to remove the difficulty than it does them, or, indeed, all that call themselves Christians, and acknowledge the divine authority of the Scriptures. Nevertheless, this matter may possibly, God allowing, be more particularly and largely considered in some future discourse, on the doctrine of predestination.*

But I would here observe, that however the defenders of that notion of liberty of will, which I have opposed,

* Not done, as ever the Editor heard.

exclaim against the doctrine of Calvinists, as tending to bring men into doubts concerning the moral perfections of God, it is their scheme, and not the scheme of Calvinists, that, indeed, is justly chargeable with this. For it is one of the most fundamental points of their scheme of things, that a freedom of will, consisting in self-determination, without all necessity, is essential to moral agency. This is the same thing as to say that such a determination of the will without all necessity must be in all intelligent beings, in those things wherein they are moral agents, or in their moral acts; and from this it will follow, that God's will is not necessarily determined in anything he does, as a moral agent, or in any of his acts that are of a moral nature. So that in all things wherein he acts holily, justly, and truly, he does not act necessarily, or his will is not necessarily determined to act holily and justly, because if it were necessarily determined, he would not be a moral agent in thus acting; his will would be attended with necessity, which they say is inconsistent with moral agency—"He can act no otherwise; he is at no liberty in the affair; he is determined by unavoidable invincible necessity. Therefore, such agency is no moral agency; yea, no agency at all, properly speaking; a necessary agent is no agent; he being passive, and subject to necessity, what he does is no act of his, but an effect of a necessity, prior to any act of his." This is agreeable to their manner of arguing. Now, then, what is become of all our proof of the moral perfections of God? How can we prove that God certainly will in any one instance do that which is just and holy, seeing his will is determined in the matter by no necessity? We have no other way of proving that any thing certainly will be, but only by the necessity of the event. Where we can see no necessity, but that the thing may be, or may not be, there we are unavoidably left at a loss. We have no other way properly and truly to demonstrate the moral perfections of God, but the way that Mr. Chubb proves them, in pages 252, 261, 262, and 263 of his tracts—namely, that God must necessarily perfectly know what is most worthy and valuable in itself which in the nature of things is best and fittest to be done. And as this is most eligible in itself, he being omniscient, must see it to be so; and being both omniscient and self-sufficient, cannot have any temptation to reject it; and so must necessarily will that which is

best. And thus, by this necessity of the determination of God's will to what is good and best, we demonstrably establish God's moral character.

Corollary.—From things which have been observed, it appears that most of the arguments from Scripture which Arminians make use of to support their scheme, are no other than begging the question. For in these their arguments they determine, in the first place, that without such a freedom of will as they hold, men cannot be proper moral agents, nor the subjects of command, counsel, persuasion, invitation, promises, threatenings, expostulations, rewards, and punishments; and that without such a freedom it is to no purpose for men to take any care, or use any diligence, endeavours, or means, in order to their avoiding sin, or becoming holy, escaping punishment, or obtaining happiness; and having supposed these things, which are grand things in question in the debate, then they heap up Scriptures containing commands, counsels, calls, warnings, persuasions, expostulations, promises, and threatenings—as doubtless they may find enow such; the Bible is confessedly full of them, from the beginning to the end—and then they glory how full the Scripture is on their side, how many more texts there are that evidently favour their scheme, than such as seem to favour the contrary. But let them first make manifest the things in question, which they suppose and take for granted, and show them to be consistent with themselves, and produce clear evidence of their truth, and they have gained their point, as all will confess, without bringing one Scripture. For none denies that there are commands, counsels, promises, threatenings, &c., in the Bible. But unless they do these things, their multiplying such texts of Scripture is insignificant and vain.

It may further be observed, that such Scriptures as they bring are really against them, and not for them. As it has been demonstrated, that it is their scheme, and not ours, that is inconsistent with the use of motives and persuasives, or any moral means whatsoever, to induce men to the practice of virtue, or abstaining from wickedness, their principles, and not ours, are repugnant to moral agency, and inconsistent with moral government, with law or precept, with the

nature of virtue or vice, reward or punishment, and with every thing whatsoever of a moral nature, either on the part of the moral governor, or in the state, actions, or conduct of the subject.

SECTION XII.

Of a Supposed Tendency of these Principles to Atheism and Licentiousness.

If any object against what has been maintained, that it tends to Atheism, I know not on what grounds such an objection can be raised, unless it be that some Atheists have held a doctrine of necessity which they suppose to be like this. But if it be so, I am persuaded the Arminians would not look upon it just that their notion of freedom and contingence should be charged with a tendency to all the errors that ever any embraced, who have held such opinions. The Stoic philosophers, whom the Calvinists are charged with agreeing with, were no Atheists, but the greatest Theists, and nearest akin to Christians, in their opinions concerning the unity and the perfections of the godhead, of all the heathen philosophers. And Epicurus, that chief father of Atheism, maintained no such doctrine of necessity, but was the greatest maintainer of contingence.

The doctrine of necessity, which supposes a necessary connection of all events, on some antecedent ground and reason of their existence, is the only medium we have to prove the being of God. And the contrary doctrine of contingence, even as maintained by Arminians—which certainly implies or infers that events may come into existence, or begin to be, without dependence on any thing foregoing, as their cause, ground, or reason—takes away all proof of the being of God; which proof is summarily expressed by the Apostle, in Rom. i., 20. And this is a tendency to Atheism with a witness. So that, indeed, it is the doctrine of Arminians, and not of the Calvinists, that is justly charged with a tendency to Atheism; it being built on a foundation that is the utter subversion of every demonstrative argument for the proof of a deity—as has been shown, Part II., Sec. iii.

And whereas it has often been said, that the Calvinistic doctrine of necessity saps the foundation of all religion and virtue, and tends to the greatest licentiousness of practice, this objection is built on the pretence, that our doctrine renders vain all means and endeavours in order to be virtuous and religious; which pretence has been already particularly considered in the fifth section of this part, where it has been demonstrated that this doctrine has no such tendency, but that such a tendency is truly to be charged on the contrary doctrine, inasmuch as the notion of contingence, which their doctrine implies, in its certain consequences, overthrows all connection, in every degree, between endeavour and event, means and end.

And, besides, if many other things which have been observed to belong to the Arminian doctrine, or to be plain consequences of it, be considered, there will appear just reason to suppose that it is that which must rather tend to licentiousness. Their doctrine excuses all evil inclinations, which men find to be natural, because in such inclinations they are not self-determined, as such inclinations are not owing to any choice or determination of their own wills. Which leads men wholly to justify themselves in all their wicked actions, so far as natural inclination has had a hand in determining their wills to the commission of them. Yea, these notions which suppose moral necessity and inability to be inconsistent with blame or moral obligation, will directly lead men to justify the vilest acts and practices, from the strength of their wicked inclinations of all sorts; strong inclinations inducing a moral necessity; yea, to excuse every degree of evil inclination, so far as this has evidently prevailed, and been the thing which has determined their wills; because, so far as antecedent inclination determined the will, so far the will was without liberty of indifference and self-determination. Which at last will come to this, that men will justify themselves in all the wickedness they commit. It has been observed already, that this scheme of things does exceedingly diminish the guilt of sin, and the difference between the greatest and smallest offences;* and if it be pursued in its real consequences, it leaves room for no such thing as

* Part III., Sect. vi.

either virtue or vice, blame or praise in the world.* And then, again, how naturally does this notion of the sovereign self-determining power of the will, in all things, virtuous or vicious, and whatsoever deserves either reward or punishment, tend to encourage men to put off the work of religion and virtue, and turning from sin to God; it being that which they have a sovereign power to determine themselves to, just when they please; or if not, they are wholly excusable in going on in sin, because of their inability to do any other.

If it should be said that the tendency of this doctrine of necessity to licentiousness appears by the improvement many at this day actually make of it to justify themselves in their dissolute courses, I will not deny that some men do unreasonably abuse this doctrine, as they do many other things which are true and excellent in their own nature; but I deny that this proves the doctrine itself has any tendency to licentiousness. I think, the tendency of doctrines, by what now appears in the world, and in our nation in particular, may much more justly be argued from the general effect which has been seen to attend the prevailing of the principles of Arminians, and the contrary principles; as both have had their turn of general prevalence in our nation. If it be, indeed, as is pretended, that Calvinistic doctrines undermine the very foundation of all religion and morality, and enervate and disannul all rational motives to holy and virtuous practice, and that the contrary doctrines give the inducements to virtue and goodness their proper force, and exhibit religion in a rational light, tending to recommend it to the reason of mankind, and enforce it in a manner that is agreeable to their natural notions of things—I say, if it be thus, it is remarkable that virtue and religious practice should prevail most when the former doctrines, so inconsistent with it, prevailed almost universally; and that ever since the latter doctrines, so happily agreeing with it, and of so proper and excellent a tendency to promote it, have been gradually prevailing, vice, profaneness, luxury and wickedness of all sorts, and contempt of all religion, and of every kind of seriousness and strictness of conversation,

* Part III., Sect. vi. Ibid., Sect. vii. Part IV., Sect. i. Part III., Sect. iii. Coral. 2, after the first head.

should proportionably prevail, and that these things should thus accompany one another, and rise and prevail one with another, now for a whole age together. It is remarkable that this happy remedy, discovered by the free inquiries and superior sense and wisdom of this age, against the pernicious effects of Calvinism, so inconsistent with religion, and tending so much to banish all virtue from the earth, should, on so long a trial, be attended with no good effect, but that the consequence should be the reverse of amendment; that in proportion, as the remedy takes place, and is thoroughly applied, so the disease should prevail, and the very same dismal effect take place, to the highest degree, which Calvinistic doctrines are supposed to have so great a tendency to; even the banishing of religion and virtue, and the prevailing of unbounded licentiousness of manners. If these things are truly so, they are very remarkable, and matter of very curious speculation.

SECTION XIII.

Concerning that Objection against the Reasoning by which the Calvinistic Doctrine is Supported that it is Metaphysical and Abstruse.

It has often been objected against the defenders of Calvinistic principles, that in their reasonings they run into nice scholastic distinctions and abstruse metaphysical subtilities. and set these in opposition to common sense. And it is possible that after the former manner it may be alleged against the reasoning by which I have endeavoured to confute the Arminian scheme of liberty and moral agency, that it is very abstracted and metaphysical. Concerning this, I would observe the following things:—

Firstly—If that be made an objection against the foregoing reasoning, that it is metaphysical, or may properly be reduced to the science of metaphysics, it is a very impertinent objection; whether it be so or no, is not worthy of any dispute or controversy. If the reasoning be good, it is as frivolous to inquire what science it is properly reduced to as what language it is delivered in; and for a man to go about to confute the arguments

of his opponent, by telling him his arguments are metaphysical, would be as weak as to tell him his arguments could not be substantial because they were written in French or Latin. The question is not whether what is said be metaphysics, physics, logic, or mathematics, Latin, French, English, or Mohawk? but, whether the reasoning be good, and the arguments truly conclusive? The foregoing arguments are no more metaphysical than those which we use against the Papists, to disprove their doctrine of transubstantiation, alleging it is inconsistent with the notion of corporeal identity that it should be in ten thousand places at the same time. It is by metaphysical arguments only we are able to prove that the rational soul is not corporeal; that lead or sand cannot think; that thoughts are not square, or round, or do not weigh a pound. The arguments by which we prove the being of God, if handled closely and distinctly, so as to show their clear and demonstrative evidence, must be metaphysically treated. It is by metaphysics only that we can demonstrate that God is not limited to a place, or is not mutable; that he is not ignorant, or forgetful; that it is impossible for him to lie, or be unjust; and that there is one God only, and not hundreds or thousands. And, indeed, we have no strict demonstration of anything, excepting mathematical truths, but by metaphysics. We can have no proof that is properly demonstrative of any one proposition, relating to the being and nature of God, his creation of the world, the dependence of all things on him, the nature of bodies or spirits, the nature of our own souls, or any of the great truths of morality and natural religion, but what is metaphysical. I am willing my arguments should be brought to the test of the strictest and justest reason, and that a clear, distinct, and determinate meaning of the terms I use should be insisted on, but let not the whole be rejected, as if all were confuted, by fixing on it the epithet metaphysical.

Secondly—If the reasoning which has been made use of be in some sense metaphysical, it will not follow that therefore it must needs be abstruse, unintelligible, and akin to the jargon of the schools. I humbly conceive the foregoing reasoning, at least as to those things which are most material belonging to it, depends on no abstruse definitions, or distinctions, or terms without a meaning, or of very ambiguous and undeter-

mined signification, or any points of such abstraction and subtilty, as tends to involve the attentive understanding in clouds and darkness. There is no high degree of refinement and abstruse speculation in determining that a thing is not before it is, and so cannot be the cause of itself; or that the first act of free choice has not another act of free choice going before that, to excite or direct it; or in determining that no choice is made while the mind remains in a state of absolute indifference; that preference and equilibrium never co-exist; and that, therefore, no choice is made in a state of liberty, consisting in indifference; and that so far as the will is determined by motives, exhibited and operating previous to the act of the will, so far it is not determined by the act of the will itself; that nothing can begin to be which before was not, without a cause, or some antecedent ground or reason why it then begins to be; that effects depend on their causes, and are connected with them; that virtue is not the worse, nor sin the better, for the strength of inclination with which it is practised, and the difficulty which thence arises of doing otherwise; that when it is already infallibly known that a thing will be, it is not a thing contingent whether it will ever be or no; or that it can be truly said, notwithstanding, that it is not necessary it should be, but it either may be, or may not be. And the like might be observed of many other things which belong to the foregoing reasoning.

If any shall still stand to it, that the foregoing reasoning is nothing but metaphysical sophistry, and that it must be so, that the seeming force of the arguments all depends upon some fallacy and wile that is hid in obscurity, which always attends a great degree of metaphysical abstraction and refinement, and shall be ready to say, "here is indeed something that tends to confound the mind, but not to satisfy it; for who can ever be truly satisfied in it that men are fitly blamed or commended, punished or rewarded, for those volitions which are not from themselves, and of whose existence they are not the causes? Men may refine as much as they please, and advance their abstract notions, and make out a thousand seeming contradictions to puzzle our understandings, yet there can be no satisfaction in such doctrine as this; the natural sense of the mind of man

will always resist it."* I humbly conceive that such an objector, if he has capacity and humility and calmness of spirit sufficient impartially and thoroughly to examine himself, will find that he knows not really what he would be at, and that, indeed, his difficulty is nothing but a mere prejudice, from an inadvertent customary use of words in a meaning that is not clearly understood, nor carefully reflected upon. Let the objector reflect again, if he has candour and patience enough, and does not scorn to be at the trouble of close attention to the affair. He would have a man's volition

* A certain noted author of the present age says, the arguments for necessity are nothing but quibbling, or logomachy, using words without a meaning, or begging the question. I do not know what kind of necessity any authors he may have reference to are advocates for; or whether they have managed their arguments well or ill. As to the arguments I have made use of, if they are quibbles, they may be shown to be so; such knots are capable of being untied, and the trick and cheat may be detected and plainly laid open. If this be fairly done, with respect to the grounds and reasons I have relied upon, I shall have just occasion for the future to be silent, or if not, to be ashamed of my argumentations. I am willing my proofs should be thoroughly examined, and if there be nothing but begging the question, or mere logomachy, or dispute of words, let it be made manifest, and shown how the seeming strength of the argument depends on my using words without a meaning, or arises from the ambiguity of terms, or making use of words in an intermediate or unsteady manner, and that the weight of my reasons rest mainly on such a foundation, and then, I shall either be ready to retract what I have urged, and thank the man that has done the kind part, or shall be justly exposed for my obstinacy.

The same author is abundant in appealing in this affair from what he calls logomachy and sophistry, to experience. A person can experience only what passes in his own mind. But yet as we may well suppose that all men have the same human faculties, so a man may well argue from his own experience to that of others in things that show the nature of those faculties, and the manner of their operation. But then one has as good right to allege his experience as another. As to my own experience, I find that in innumerable things I can do as I will; that the motions of my body, in many respects, instantaneously follow the acts of my will concerning those motions; and that my will has some command of my thoughts; and that the acts of my will are my own—*i.e.*, that they are acts of my will, the volitions of my own mind, or, in other words, that what I will, I will. Which, I presume, is the sum of what others experience in this affair. But as to finding by experience that my will is originally determined by itself, or that my will first choosing what volition there shall be, the chosen volition accordingly follows, and that this is the first rise of the determination of my will in any affair, or that any volition arises in my mind contingently, I declare I know nothing in myself by experience of this nature, and nothing that ever I experienced carries the least appearance or shadow of any such thing, or gives me any more reason to suppose or suspect any such thing, than to suppose that my volitions existed twenty years before they existed. It is true I find myself possessed of my volitions before I can see the effectual power of any cause to produce them, (for the power and efficacy of the cause is not seen, but by the effect,) and this, for ought I know, may make some imagine that volition has no cause, or that it produces itself. But I have no more reason from hence to determine any such thing than I have to determine that I gave myself my own being, or that I came into being accidentally without a cause, because I first found myself possessed of being, before I had knowledge of a cause of my being.

be from himself. Let it be from himself, most primarily and originally of any way conceivable—that is from his own choice. How will that help the matter as to his being justly blamed or praised, unless that choice itself be blame or praiseworthy? And how is the choice itself—an ill choice, for instance—blameworthy, according to these principles, unless that be from himself too, in the same manner; that is from his own choice? But the original and first-determining choice in the affair is not from his choice; his choice is not the cause of it. And if it be from himself some other way, and not from his choice, surely that will not help the matter; if it be not from himself of choice, then it is not from himself voluntarily; and if so, he is surely no more to blame than if it were not from himself at all. It is a vanity to pretend it is a sufficient answer to this to say that it is nothing but metaphysical refinement and subtlety, and so attended with obscurity and uncertainty.

If it be the natural sense of our minds that what is blameworthy in a man must be from himself, then it doubtless is also that it must be from something bad in himself; a bad choice, or bad disposition. But then our natural sense is that this bad choice or disposition is evil in itself, and the man blameworthy for it, on its own account, without taking into our notion of its blameworthiness another bad choice or disposition going before this, from whence this arises; for that is a ridiculous absurdity, running us into an immediate contradiction, which our natural sense of blameworthiness has nothing to do with, and never comes into the mind, nor is supposed in the judgment we naturally make of the affair. As was demonstrated before, natural sense does not place the moral evil of volitions and dispositions in the cause of them, but the nature of them. An evil thing's being *from* a man, or from something antecedent in him, is not essential to the original notion we have of blameworthiness; but it is its being the choice of the heart, as appears by this, that if a thing is from us, and not from our choice, it has not the nature of blameworthiness or ill-desert, according to our natural sense. When a thing is from a man, in that sense that it is from his will or choice, he is to blame for it, because his will is *in it*; so far as the will is in it, blame is in it, and no *further*. Neither do we go any further in our notions

of blame to inquire whether the bad will be *from* a bad will; there is no consideration of the original of that bad will, because, according to our natural apprehension, blame originally consists in it. Therefore, a thing's being from a man is a secondary consideration in the notion of blame or ill-desert. Because those things in our external actions are most properly said to be from us which are from our choice; and no external actions but those that are from us in this sense have the nature of blame; and they, indeed, not so properly because they are from us, as because we are in them—*i.e.*, our wills are in them, not so much because they are some property of ours, as because they are our properties.

However, all these external actions being truly from us, as their cause, and we being so used, in ordinary speech and in the common affairs of life, to speak of men's actions and conduct that we see, and that affect human society, as deserving ill or well, as worthy of blame or praise, hence it is come to pass that philosophers have incautiously taken all their measures of good and evil, praise and blame, from the dictates of common sense, about these overt acts of men, to the running of everything into the most lamentable and dreadful confusion. And therefore I observe—

Thirdly—It is so far from being true, whatever may be pretended, that the proof of the doctrine which has been maintained depends on certain abstruse, unintelligible, metaphysical terms and notions, and that the Arminian scheme, without needing such clouds and darkness for its defence, is supported by the plain dictates of common sense, that the very reverse is most certainly true, and that to a great degree. It is fact that they, and not we, have confounded things with metaphysical, unintelligible notions and phrases, and have drawn them from the light of plain truth into the gross darkness of abstruse metaphysical propositions, and words without a meaning. Their pretended demonstrations depend very much on such unintelligible metaphysical phrases as self-determination, and sovereignty of the will, and the metaphysical sense they put on such terms as necessity, contingency, action, agency, &c., quite diverse from their meaning, as used in common speech, and which, as they use them, are without any consistent meaning, or any manner of

distinct consistent ideas, as far from it as any of the abstruse terms and perplexed phrases of the peripatetic philosophers, or the most unintelligible jargon of the schools, or the cant of wildest fanatics. Yea, we may be bold to say, these metaphysical terms, on which they build so much, are what they use without knowing what they mean themselves; they are pure metaphysical sounds, without any ideas whatsover in their minds to answer them; inasmuch as it has been demonstrated that there cannot be any notion in the mind consistent with these expressions as they pretend to explain them, because their explanations destroy themselves. No such notions as imply self-contradiction and self-abolition, and this a great many ways, can subsist in the mind; as there can be no idea of a whole which is less than any of its parts, or of solid extension without dimensions, or of an effect which is before its cause. Arminians improve these terms as terms of art, and in their metaphysical meaning, to advance and establish those things which are contrary to common sense in a high degree. Thus, instead of the plain vulgar notion of liberty, which all mankind in every part of the face of the earth, and in all ages, have—consisting in opportunity to do as one pleases—they have introduced a new strange liberty, consisting in indifference, contingence, and self-determination; by which they involve themselves and others in great obscurity, and manifold gross inconsistence. So, instead of placing virtue and vice, as common sense places them, very much in fixed bias and inclination, and greater virtue and vice in stronger and more established inclination, these, through their refinings and abstruse notions, suppose a liberty consisting in indifference to be essential to all virtue and vice. So they have reasoned themselves, not by metaphysical distinctions, but metaphysical confusion, into many principles about moral agency, blame, praise, reward and punishment, which are, as has been shown, exceeding contrary to the common sense of mankind, and perhaps to their own sense which governs them in common life.

THE CONCLUSION.

WHETHER the things which have been alleged are liable to any tolerable answer in the way of calm, intelligible, and strict reasoning, I must leave others to judge; but I am sensible they are liable to one sort of answer. It is not unlikely that some who value themselves on the supposed rational and generous principles of the modern fashionable divinity, will have their indignation and disdain raised at the sight of this discourse, and on perceiving what things are pretended to be proved in it. And if they think it worthy of being read, or of so much notice as to say much about it, they may probably renew the usual exclamations, with additional vehemence and contempt, about the fate of the heathen, Hobbes's necessity, and making men mere machines; accumulating the terrible epithets of fatal, unfrustrable, inevitable, irresistible, &c., and, it may be, with the addition of horrid and blasphemous; and perhaps much skill may be used to set forth things which have been said in colours which shall be shocking to the imaginations, and moving to the passions, of those who have either too little capacity, or too much confidence of the opinions they have imbibed, and contempt of the contrary, to try the matter by any serious and circumspect examination.*

* A writer of the present age, whom I have several times had occasion to mention, speaks once and again of those who hold the doctrine of necessity as scarcely worthy of the name of philosophers. I do not know whether he has respect to any particular notion of necessity that some may have maintained; and if so, what doctrine of necessity it is that he means. Whether I am worthy of the name of a philosopher or not, would be a question little to the present purpose. If any, and ever so many, should deny it, I should not think it worth the while to enter into a dispute on that question;

Or difficulties may be started and insisted on which do not belong to the controversy, because, let them be more or less real, and hard to be resolved, they are not what are owing to anything distinguishing of this scheme from that of the Arminians, and would not be removed nor diminished by renouncing the former, and adhering to the latter. Or some particular things may be picked out, which they may think will sound harshest in the ears of the generality; and these may be glossed and descanted on with tart and contemptuous words, and from thence the whole treated with triumph and insult.

It is easy to see how the decision of most of the points in controversy, between Calvinists and Arminians, depends on the determination of this grand article concerning the freedom of the will requisite to moral agency; and that by clearing and establishing the Calvinistic doctrine in this point, the chief arguments are obviated, by which Arminian doctrines in general are supported, and the contrary doctrines demonstratively confirmed. Hereby it becomes manifest that God's moral government over mankind, his treating them as moral agents, making them the objects of his commands, counsels, calls, warnings, expostulations, promises, threatenings, rewards, and punishments, is not inconsistent with a determining disposal of all events, of every kind, throughout the universe, in his providence—either by positive efficiency or permission. Indeed, such a universal determining providence infers some kind of necessity of all events, such a necessity as implies an infallible previous fixedness of the futurity of the event; but no other necessity of moral events, or volitions of intelligent agents, is needful in order to this, than moral necessity, which does as much ascertain the futurity of the event as any other necessity. But, as has been demonstrated, such a necessity is not at all repugnant to moral agency, and the reasonable use of commands, calls, rewards, punishments, &c. Yea, not only are objections of this kind against the

though, at the same time, I might expect some better answer should be given to the arguments brought for the truth of the doctrine I maintain; and I might further reasonably desire that it might be considered whether it do not become those who are truly worthy of the name of philosophers to be sensible that there is a difference between argument and contempt; yea, and a difference between the contemptibleness of the person that argues, and *the* inconclusiveness of the arguments he offers.

doctrine of an universal determining providence removed by what has been said, but the truth of such a doctrine is demonstrated. As it has been demonstrated that the futurity of all future events is established by previous necessity, either natural or moral, so it is manifest that the sovereign creator and disposer of the world has ordered this necessity, by ordering his own conduct, either in designedly acting or forbearing to act. For as the being of the world is from God, so the circumstances in which it had its being at first, both negative and positive, must be ordered by him, in one of these ways; and all the necessary consequences of these circumstances must be ordered by him. And God's active and positive interpositions, after the world was created, and the consequences of these interpositions, also every instance of this forbearing to interpose, and the sure consequences of his forbearance, must all be determined according to his pleasure. And, therefore, every event which is the consequence of any thing whatsoever, or that is connected with any foregoing thing or circumstance, either positive or negative, as the ground or reason of its existence, must be ordered of God, either by a designed efficiency and interposition, or a designed forbearing to operate or interpose. But, as has been proved, all events whatsoever are necessarily connected with something foregoing, either positive or negative, which is the ground of its existence. It follows, therefore, that the whole series of events is thus connected with something in the state of things, either positive or negative, which is original in the series—*i. e.*, something which is connected with nothing preceding that, but God's own immediate conduct, either his acting or forbearing to act. From whence it follows, that as God designedly orders his own conduct, and its connected consequences, it must necessarily be that he designedly orders all things.

The things which have been said obviate some of the chief objections of Arminians against the Calvinistic doctrine of the total depravity and corruption of man's nature, whereby his heart is wholly under the power of sin, and he is utterably unable, without the interposition of sovereign grace, savingly to love God, believe in Christ, or do anything that is truly good and acceptable in God's sight. For the main objection against this doctrine is, that it is inconsistent with the freedom of

man's will, consisting in indifference and self-determining power; because it supposes man to be under a necessity of sinning, and that God requires things of him, in order to his avoiding eternal damnation, which he is unable to do; and that this doctrine is wholly inconsistent with the sincerity of counsels, invitations, &c. Now this doctrine supposes no other necessity of sinning than a moral necessity, which, as has been shown, does not at all excuse sin; and supposes no other inability to obey any command or perform any duty, even the most spiritual and exalted, but a moral inability, which, as has been proved, does not excuse persons in the non-performance of any good thing, or make them not to be the proper objects of commands, counsels, and invitations. And, moreover, it has been shown that there is not, and never can be, either in existence or so much as in idea, any such freedom of will consisting in indifference and self-determination, for the sake of which this doctrine of original sin is cast out, and that no such freedom is necessary in order to the nature of sin and a just desert of punishment.

The things which have been observed do also take off the main objections of Arminians against the doctrine of efficacious grace, and, at the same time, prove the grace of God in a sinner's conversion (if there be any grace or divine influence in the affair) to be efficacious, yea, and irresistible too, if by irresistible is meant that which is attended with a moral necessity, which it is impossible should ever be violated by any resistance. The main objection of Arminians against this doctrine is, that it is inconsistent with their self-determining freedom of will, and that it is repugnant to the nature of virtue that it should be wrought in the heart by the determining efficacy and power of another, instead of its being owing to a self-moving power; that in that case the good which is wrought would not be our virtue, but rather God's virtue, because it is not the person in whom it is wrought that is the determining author of it, but God that wrought it in him. But the things which are the foundation of these objections have been considered, and it has been demonstrated that the liberty of moral agents does not consist in self-determining power, and that there is no need of any such liberty in order to the nature of virtue; nor does it at all hinder but that the state or act of the will may be the virtue of

the subject, though it be not from self-determination, but the determination of an extrinsic cause; even so as to cause the event to be morally necessary to the subject of it. And as it has been proved that nothing in the state or acts of the will of man is contingent, but that, on the contrary, every event of this kind is necessary, by a moral necessity, and as it has also been now demonstrated that the doctrine of an universal determining providence follows from that doctrine of necessity which was proved before — and so that God does decisively, in his providence, order all the volitions of moral agents, either by positive influence or permission— and it being allowed, on all hands, that what God does in the affair of man's virtuous volitions, whether it be more or less, is by some positive influence, and not by mere permission, as in the affair of a sinful volition— if we put these things together, it will follow that God's assistance or influence must be determining and decisive, or must be attended with a moral necessity of the event; and so that God gives virtue, holiness, and conversion to sinners, by an influence which determines the effect in such a manner that the effect will infallibly follow by a moral necessity; which is what Calvinists mean by efficacious and irresistible grace.

The things which have been said do likewise answer the chief objections against the doctrine of God's universal and absolute decree, and afford infallible proof of that doctrine, and of the doctrine of absolute, eternal, personal election in particular. The main objections against these doctrines are that they infer a necessity of the volitions of moral agents and of the future moral state and acts of men, and so are not consistent with those eternal rewards and punishments which are connected with conversion and impenitence; nor can be made to agree with the reasonableness and sincerity of the precepts, calls, counsels, warnings, and expostulations of the word of God; or with the various methods and means of grace which God uses with sinners to bring them to repentance; and the whole of that moral government which God exercises towards mankind; and that they infer an inconsistence between the secret and revealed will of God, and make God the author of sin. But all these things have been obviated in the preceding discourse. And the certain truth of these doctrines, concerning God's eternal purposes, will follow from what

was just now observed concerning God's universal providence; how it infallibly follows from what has been proved that God orders all events, and the volitions of moral agents amongst others, by such a decisive disposal that the events are infallibly connected with his disposal. For if God disposes all events so that the infallible existence of the events is decided by his providence, then he doubtless thus orders and decides things knowingly and on design. God does not do what he does, nor order what he orders, accidentally and unawares, either without or beside his intention. And if there be a foregoing design of doing and ordering as he does, this is the same with a purpose or decree. And as it has been shown that nothing is new to God, in any respect, but all things are perfectly and equally in his view from eternity, hence it will follow that his designs or purposes are not things formed anew, founded on any new views or appearance, but are all eternal purposes. And as it has been now shown how the doctrine of determining efficacious grace certainly follows from things proved in the foregoing discourse—hence will necessarily follow the doctrine of particular, eternal, absolute election. For if men are made true saints no otherwise than as God makes them so, and distinguishes them from others, by an efficacious power and influence of his, that decides and fixes the event, and God thus makes some saints, and not others, on design or purpose, and, as has been now observed, no designs of God are new, it follows that God thus distinguished from others all that ever become true saints, by his eternal design or decree. I might also show how God's certain foreknowledge must suppose an absolute decree, and how such a decree can be proved to a demonstration from it; but that this discourse may not be lengthened out too much, that must be omitted for the present.

From these things it will inevitably follow that, however Christ, in some sense, may be said to die for all, and to redeem all visible Christians, yea, the whole world, by his death, yet there must be something particular in the design of his death with respect to such as he intended should actually be saved thereby. As appears by what has been now shown, God has the actual salvation or redemption of a certain number in his proper absolute design, and of a certain number *only;* and, therefore, such a design only can be

prosecuted in anything God does in order to the salvation of men. God pursues a proper design of the salvation of the elect in giving Christ to die, and prosecutes such a design with respect to no other, most strictly speaking; for it is impossible that God should prosecute any other design than only such as he has; he certainly does not, in the highest propriety and strictness of speech, pursue a design that he has not. And, indeed, such a particularity and limitation of redemption will as infallibly follow from the doctrine of God's foreknowledge as from that of the decree. For it is as impossible, in strictness of speech, that God should prosecute a design, or aim at a thing, which he at the same time most perfectly knows will not be accomplished, as that he should use endeavours for that which is beside his decree.

By the things which have been proved are obviated some of the main objections against the doctrine of the infallible and necessary perseverance of saints, and some of the main foundations of this doctrine are established. The main prejudices of Arminians against this doctrine seem to be these—they suppose such a necessary, infallible perseverance to be repugnant to the freedom of the will; that it must be owing to man's own self-determining power that he first becomes virtuous and holy; and so, in like manner, it must be left a thing contingent, to be determined by the same freedom of will, whether he will persevere in virtue and holiness; and that otherwise his continuing steadfast in faith and obedience would not be his virtue, or at all praiseworthy and rewardable; nor could his perseverance be properly the matter of divine commands, counsels, and promises; nor his apostacy be properly threatened, and men warned against it. Whereas we find all these things in Scripture; there we find steadfastness and perseverance in true Christianity represented as the virtue of the saints, spoken of as praiseworthy in them, and glorious rewards promised to it; and also find that God makes it the subject of his commands, counsels, and promises; and the contrary, of threatenings and warnings. But the foundation of these objections has been removed, in its being shown that moral necessity and infallible certainty of events is not inconsistent with these things, and that, as to freedom of will lying in the power of the will to

determine itself, there neither is any such thing, nor any need of it, in order to virtue, reward, commands, counsels, &c.

And as the doctrines of efficacious grace and absolute election do certainly follow from things which have been proved in the preceding discourse, so some of the main foundations of the doctrine of perseverance are thereby established. If the beginning of true faith and holiness, and a man's becoming a true saint at first, does not depend on the self-determining power of the will, but on the determining efficacious grace of God, it may well be argued that it is so also with respect to men's being continued saints, or persevering in faith and holiness. The conversion of a sinner being not owing to a man's self-determination, but to God's determination, and eternal election, which is absolute, and depending on the sovereign will of God, and not on the free will of man, as is evident from what has been said—and it being very evident from the Scriptures that the eternal election which there is of saints to faith and holiness, is also an election of them to eternal salvation—hence their appointment to salvation must also be absolute, and not depending on their contingent, self-determining will. From all which it follows that it is absolutely fixed in God's decree that all true saints shall persevere to actual eternal salvation.

But I must leave all these things to the consideration of the fair and impartial reader, and when he has maturely weighed them, I would propose it to his consideration, whether many of the first Reformers, and others that succeeded them, whom God in their day made the chief pillars of his church, and greatest instruments of their deliverance from error and darkness, and of the support of the cause of piety among them, have not been injured in the contempt with which they have been treated by many late writers, for their teaching and maintaining such doctrines as are commonly called Calvinistic. Indeed, some of these new writers, at the same time that they have represented the doctrines of these ancient and eminent divines as in the highest degree ridiculous, and contrary to common sense, in an ostentation of a very generous charity, have allowed that they were honest well-meaning men; yea, it may be, some of them, as though it were in great condescension

and compassion to them, have allowed that they did pretty well for the day which they lived in, and considering the great disadvantages they laboured under; when, at the same time, their manner of speaking has naturally and plainly suggested to the minds of their readers that they were persons who, through the lowness of their genius, and greatness of the bigotry with which their minds were shackled and thoughts confined, living in the gloomy caves of superstition, fondly embraced, and demurely and zealously taught, the most absurd, silly, and monstrous opinions, worthy of the greatest contempt of gentlemen possessed of that noble and generous freedom of thought which happily prevails in this age of light and inquiry, When, indeed, such is the case that we might, if so disposed, speak as big words as they, and on far better grounds. And really all the Arminians on earth might be challenged, without arrogance or vanity, to make these principles of theirs wherein they mainly differ from their fathers, whom they so much despise, consistent with common sense; yea, and perhaps to produce any doctrine ever embraced by the blindest bigot of the church of Rome, or the most ignorant Mussulman, or extravagant enthusiast, that might be reduced to more and more demonstrable inconsistencies, and repugnancies to common sense, and to themselves; though their inconsistencies, indeed, may not lie so deep, or be so artfully veiled by a deceitful ambiguity of words, and an indeterminate signification of phrases. I will not deny that these gentlemen, many of them, are men of great abilities, and have been helped to higher attainments in philosophy than those ancient divines, and have done great service to the Church of God in some respects. But I humbly conceive that their differing from their fathers with such magisterial assurance, in these points in divinity, must be owing to some other cause than superior wisdom.

It may also be worthy of consideration whether the great alteration which has been made in the state of things in our nation, and some other parts of the Protestant world, in this and the past age, by the exploding so generally Calvinistic doctrines, that is so often spoken of as worthy to be greatly rejoiced in by the friends of truth, learning, and virtue, as an instance of the great increase of light in the Christian Church—I say, it may be worthy to be considered whether this be, indeed, a

happy change, owing to any such cause as an increase of true knowledge and understanding in things of religion, or whether there is not reason to fear, that it may be owing to some worse cause.

And I desire it may be considered whether the boldness of some writers may not be worthy to be reflected on, who have not scrupled to say that if these and those things are true—which yet appear to be the demonstrable dictates of reason, as well as the certain dictates of the mouth of the most high—then God is unjust and cruel, and guilty of manifest deceit and double-dealing, and the like. Yea, some have gone to far as confidently to assert that if any book, which pretends to be Scripture, teaches such doctrine, that alone is sufficient warrant for mankind to reject it, as what cannot be the word of God. Some who have not gone so far, have said, that if the Scripture seems to teach any such doctrines, so contrary to reason, we are obliged to find out some other interpretation of those texts, where such doctrines seem to be exhibited. Others express themselves yet more modestly; they express a tenderness and religious fear lest they should receive and teach anything that should seem to reflect on God's moral character, or be a disparagement to his methods of administration in his moral government; and, therefore, express themselves as not daring to embrace some doctrines, though they seem to be delivered in Scripture, according to the more obvious and natural construction of the words. But, indeed, it would show a truer modesty and humility if they would more entirely rely on God's wisdom and discerning, who knows infinitely better than we what is agreeable to his own perfections, and never intended to leave these matters to the decision of the wisdom and discerning of men; but by his own unerring instruction, to determine for us what the truth is, knowing how little our judgment is to be depended on, and how extremely prone vain and blind men are to err in such matters.

The truth of the case is, that if the Scripture plainly taught the opposite doctrines to those that are so much stumbled at—namely, the Arminian doctrine of free will, and others depending thereon—it would be the greatest of all difficulties that attend the Scriptures, incomparably greater than its containing any, even the most mysterious, of those doctrines of the first Reformers,

which our late free-thinkers have so superciliously exploded. Indeed, it is a glorious argument of the divinity of the Holy Scriptures that they teach such doctrines, which in one age and another, through the blindness of men's minds, and strong prejudices of their hearts, are rejected, as most absurd and unreasonable, by the wise and great men of the world; which yet, when they are most carefully and strictly examined, appear to be exactly agreeable to the most demonstrable, certain, and natural dictates of reason. By such things it appears that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and God does as is said in 1, Cor. i., 19, 20, "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise! where is the scribe! where is the disputer of this world! hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" And as it used to be in time past, so it is probable it will be in time to come, as it is there written, in verses 27, 28, and 29, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence." Amen.

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